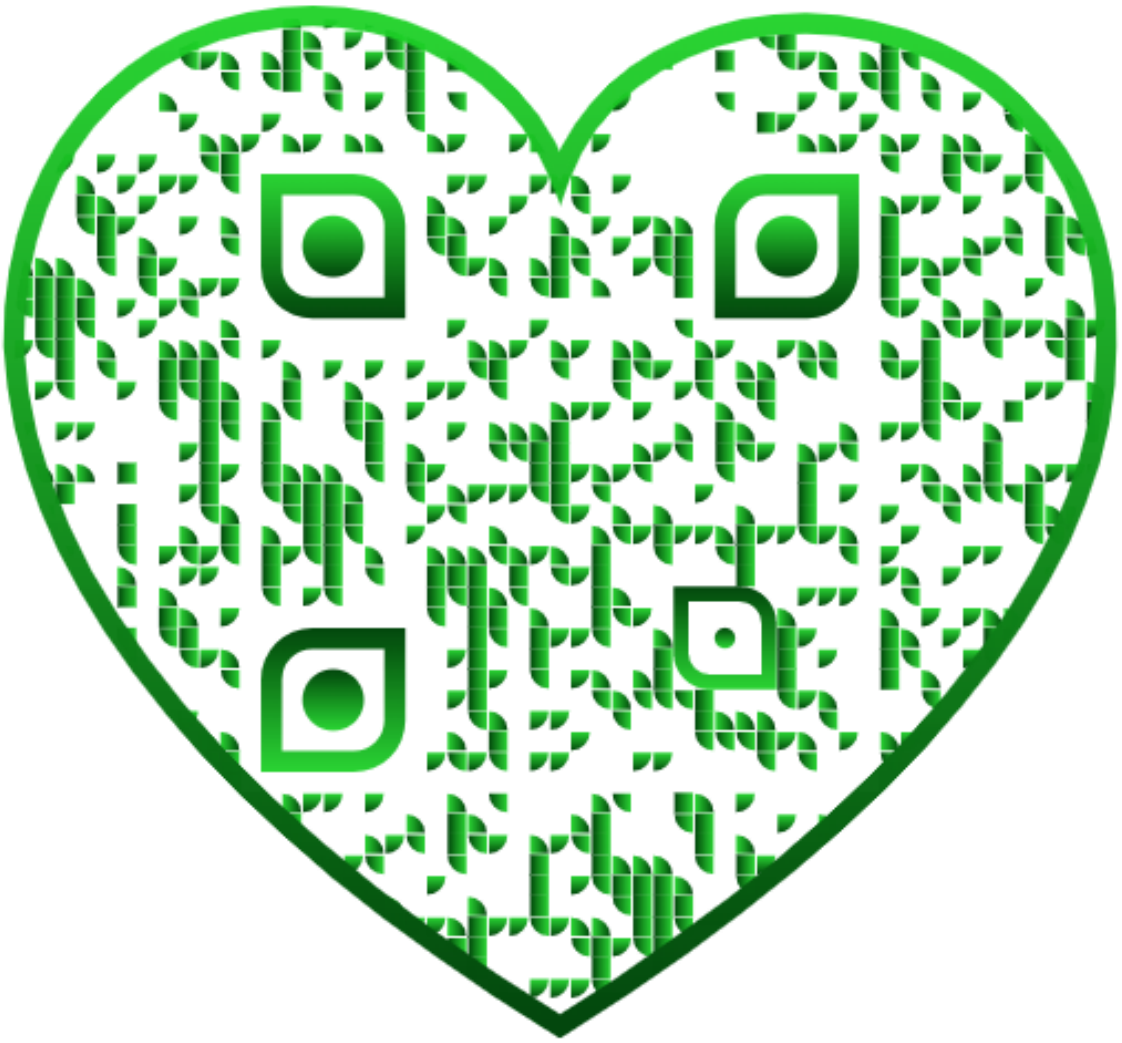
THE INVISIBLE HISTORY OF THE ROSICRUCIANS

The World's Most Mysterious Secret Society

TOBIAS CHURTON



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INTRODUCTION

When I was a student at Oxford in the late 1970s, esoteric theology was about as popular with the university authorities as Jewish studies would have been under the Nazis. To be frank, the subject simply did not exist. The theology courses had been established with the needs of the Catholic and Protestant Churches uppermost in mind, and all that churchmen needed to know was that there was something called "heresy" and that it was contemptible. Why was it contemptible?—because it did not conform to the teachings of the churches.

I have racked my brain to determine when I first became aware that there was a different way of looking at the matter of religion, a vision neither Catholic nor Protestant, but something wholly spiritual—and *real*. I do not think I can really say when that awareness came to me. When I was a boy, *everything* was spiritual. We lived, as it were, from out of ourselves into the world. The inner and the outer worlds were magically one.

This innocent state was a lot of fun, most of the time. There was little need for ritual, art, books, and other supports when there was such a fabulous range of toys and playmates around. The "material world" meant model soldiers, cowboys and Indians, Batman and Robin.

Toys are material fantasies, living links between imagination and hard matter, like the idols and icons of old. TV (before journalists predominated) was just dream stuff, though it packed a surprising emotional punch. Almighty God had blessed the world with such delights for boys and girls, and it all proved he must have been a thoroughly Good sort, because *we* had defeated the Germans, and the communists were having a miserable time. What could they expect if they tortured people for being honest?

Furthermore, there were cinemas, showing mostly American films, where good people often won because they were good. How very spiritual! The best films were wonderful exercises in techniques of imagination: fantastically positive, stylish, witty, and chock-full of ideas for fresh games. It was often

bliss to be alive. And when you felt bliss, something that was so very good welled up from deep inside: pure spirit. The spiritual world came gushing out, ready to wash about anything analogous that came into view. It was so intoxicating it is amazing there was not a law against it.

There was; but I had not hit it yet. “A little Child shall lead them”—but who will follow?

The magic lantern was magic, all right—light in the darkness, with exit signs on either side of the screen, just like life.

It was not to last.

Someone said that growing up is a crime. When Herod tried to kill Christ, the first thing he did was to murder the newborn of Bethlehem.

Childhood and innocence are central to the genuine gnostic tradition. Gnostics have been accused of practically everything wicked over the centuries, but child abuse has never appeared on the indictment. *That* seems to be a specialty of a suspiciously large number of more orthodox religious teachers.

How do you judge a religion? *How about this?* Look at how they treat the children. The same goes for the state—any state. Yes, I know. “They” are not all “like that.” Sure, most are benign enough much of the time—until you challenge them directly. I speak from experience.

I have often wondered if it might have been the experience of seeing Alexander Korda’s film *The Thief of Baghdad* (1940) that first turned me on to the Rosicrucian tradition. In that film, there is a scene when the boy-thief Abu is projected “out of this world” into an obscure desert place after smashing the “all-seeing eye.”

In the desert a group of pure-white tents appears. Inside one of them, Abu encounters “the relics of a golden age” (“Gold because gold was nothing; no more than the sand beneath your feet,” as one of the film’s characters states). The “relics” are a welcoming committee of wise old men dressed like Eastern magi, with wonderful silk turbans like some old representations of the mystic hierophant Hermes Trismegistus.

Abu is addressed warmly by the master and told that his arrival has long been expected: “For *you* we have been waiting twice ten thousand years.”

Despised by the world, lowly and condemned, the boy-thief is to them a figure bright with transformative promise, a real pearl. What he must otherwise steal, they will give him.

The coming of the Child wakes them from the unconscious dream state ("the land of legend") to a fabulous moment where these wise men, formerly "petrified [literally] with horror at the evil done among men," may speak again to one who will listen.

As the old masters are awakened from stony slumber, so is the Child. He is given the arrows of truth to fire at the dark princes of murder and injustice. Naive to the political realities, Abu wants only "to help his friend"; he succeeds where the politicians have failed.

The scene must have pushed a few subconscious buttons, because to my mind this fantasy had more "realism" about it than *Goodfellas*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and all those black-and-white "gritty" dramas set in the north of England put together. It all depends on how much of "the real" you are acquainted with.

The right kind of fantasy may capture the depth of reality far more powerfully than the mere imitation of materially perceptible events. Realism is reflective; fantasy may be truth. The reason most modern films fail to satisfy after the initial sensation is that their makers are generally out of touch with spiritual reality. But let's face it, some film producers seem out of touch with *any* reality! The old Hollywood was not afraid of the dream state, and it was not afraid of religion and spirituality either. You could say they were naive, but what good has "knowledge" done them? The long rank of self-protecting cynics can always make way for another disappointed romantic who has lost faith; the queue leads nowhere.

All right, this is not a book about the movies. But it *is* a book about a fantasy, a game, and it is quite possible that had movies been around at the time of the creation of this particular fantasy, it may have been a movie we should be discussing. As it is, we are discussing the effect of a particularly potent booklet, first published in the spring of 1614.

What have I been trying to say? Perhaps this: when I was studying theology, I was all the time aware that there was *another story* I should have been studying, that I wanted to study. But no one had heard of it; I would have to look for it.

A quarter of a century later, that story has coalesced into an academic discipline. It is called Western Esotericism. This is not a great title. In its favor, “Western Esotericism” does sound suitably academic and does not immediately suggest manifestations of the Devil to the drier guardians of academe. At least we know we are talking about esoteric matters, even if it is somewhat presumptuous to call them “Western.”

The “Western” idea seems to have come about because back in the past, many thought (following Madame Blavatsky’s Theosophy movement) that spirituality was a preserve of the so-called mystic East. The Beatles, for example, apparently had to go to Rishikesh by the Himalayas to learn about meditation. They should have been able to learn about it at school. The knowledge was there, but it had been quietly suppressed in oh-so-scientific Europe.

The only people who knew about esoteric theology in those days were dismissed and often feared as “occultists” or just plain “nutters,” two steps out of the mental asylum. The constant battle over “alternative medicine” shows just how bitter the debate still is. The inquisitors are still about, claiming reason is on their side; they are not much fun: unlike children, they have no time for magicians.

I remember going back to my college to find an old book for a TV documentary I was making. I was told that it was in the “cupboard.” The cupboard turned out to be a tiny stockroom locked up behind some old tables near the communal washrooms, the kind of place where repressed and repressive Victorians might have locked up naughty children.

At some point in the college’s past, it had been decided to put all the classics of renaissance hermetic and Neoplatonist philosophy together, out of sight of students. There they were, dusty on the shelves: Ficino, Hermes Trismegistus, Pico della Mirandola—spiritual brothers-in-arms, unloved and unwanted. They had not been banned, exactly; they had been *removed*. Humanity had moved on. This “stuff ” was from the pre-scientific era and had no more to say to the mind than astrology had to the practitioners of the Hubble telescope.

Before there was “Western Esotericism,” there was the odd, rare herald.

In 1980, I chanced upon a little book at the Pusey House Theological

Library, Oxford, a library specializing in Anglo-Catholic theological learning. Somehow, this little gem had slipped through the net. I seized this work, entitled *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age,* like an old friend. Little did I know that its author, Dame Frances Yates, was living but half a mile away at Lady Margaret Hall.

Scholarship today is inclined to remove itself from certain aspects of Frances Yates's often pioneering work. You will see in this book, *The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians,* for example, that a number of her cherished themes regarding the origin of the Rosicrucian movement no longer hold water in the light of recent investigation. Nevertheless, for a student in 1980, this modest little book seemed a tumultuous breakthrough: clear water in a parched desert. I wondered who else might be reading it; I felt alone, but was not.

The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age was slim, but what it did in its brief tenure of the reader's attention was to link up coherently certain themes of philosophical debate in the Elizabethan era (late sixteenth century). The author found that these themes all had something significant in common. What that thing was has been called the "Hermetic" and sometimes the "Rosicrucian" philosophy. In short, though Yates was hesitant to give the idea more weight than mild suggestion, the philosophy that moved the most advanced and most outspoken minds of the era was, according to her analysis, fundamentally *gnostic*.

The thinking of Francesco Giorgi, Johannes Reuchlin, Pico della Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, Giordano Bruno, Marsilio Ficino, Robert Fludd, John Dee—and the "Rosicrucians"—was based on a spiritual insight or experience of liberating *gnosis* (spiritual knowledge). This knowledge could free its practitioner from the bonds of earth and acquaint him or her with a higher knowledge tradition that could, in its clear and visionary way, take human beings out of the material realm back to the innocence of Adam on his first morning in the unspoiled Garden. Humans could overcome the effects of the Fall, or at least some of them.

If all this was heresy, then heresy had an awful lot going for it. It spoke to the Child with a message a child could understand.

It was nice to know that the first truly human being had been put out to play in a Garden just like a middle-class boy in a leafy town in the 1960s. I

too had found the spirit of eternity in a garden. The story related by Frances Yates chimed in with the perceptions of innocence. This was the kind of thing I wished I had read *before* entering the hoary groves of academe. But I could not have; it had only just been written. And yet, as I read it, all I could think about was the idea that I somehow *knew this already*. The overriding impression was of a consistent process of confirmation. Here was scholarly flesh on the dry bones of my deepest suspicions.

What was more, it seems that these very suspicions had been entertained by outstanding men of learning five hundred years before, and—if we are to believe the tradition—long before that as well. The history that everyone could hear from orthodox sources concealed a secret process of transmission that went back, apparently (or not apparently), to the beginnings, the genesis of civilized human awareness. The story was somehow written *within*.

Frances Yates had been drawing from the same well as the subjects she wrote about; this was too personal an approach for many scholars. Not for me. She was following her intuition. Her reason was enlightened by something higher than itself. She overstepped the constraints of rational scholarship. This naughtiness got her into trouble, and in an absence forced upon her only by death, her calumniators have not been slow to apply scholars' pitch to her reputation; she had gone too far.

I am so glad she did. The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

MY ROSICRUCIAN ADVENTURE

Now we come to the Rosicrucian tradition itself. This was a movement that we can investigate and trace from its origins in the very early seventeenth century, as well as track (by paths of inspiration) its curious journey to the present day. However, the movement's dominant writings claimed to go back even further, to the adventures of a runaway monk from the fourteenth century who had escaped the narrow-mindedness of his cloister to explore the limitless vistas of the Middle East. The movement began with a fantasy, a story that seemed to ring curiously true in the minds of some outstanding men and women.

Then, there was another dimension. The fantasy suggested that this particular manifestation of wisdom—the House of the Holy Spirit founded by

frater C.R.—was only an instance of a much older tradition. The older tradition, revealed to *fratres R.C.* by the wise men of "Damcar" in Arabia (according to the first "Rosicrucian manifesto"), had, it was alleged, provided the secret language of a pristine, angelic religion, unspoiled by fallen human hands. Knowledge of that supernal tongue had manifested itself among the truly wise (the chosen vessels) since time immemorial.

The Rosicrucian tradition, then, was not only a historic movement, it was also an example of a secret metahistory manifesting through time, glimpsed by many but understood by only a few. "Narrow is the way, and few be they that find it" are words attributed by the canonical Gospels to Christ, but they belong to the argot of *gnosis,* of esoteric or inner spiritual awareness.

What could *I* do about it?

In the absence of any ecclesiastical interest, I would have to go straight to the people by the most direct means available: television. Once I had embarked on this tortuous road of communication, you could say my long, extraordinary Rosicrucian adventure began in earnest.

In 1985, I began work on the Channel 4 TV series *Gnostics,* the like of which had not been seen before and has not been seen since; the series has disappeared.

In the course of research I had the very good fortune to encounter a wealthy Dutch businessman, a man with a fabulous Gnostic library—and, to cap it all, he was a practicing Rosicrucian, or perhaps I should say neo-Rosicrucian. (We analyze what we might mean by the word "Rosicrucian" in chapter 13.)

Joost Ritman encouraged by all means available a much deeper—and challenging—acquaintance with the Rosicrucian tradition. Through my association with his unique library, the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica in Amsterdam, I was able to encounter at close quarters the cutting edge of global Rosicrucian research, as it happened. It was a heady, privileged experience. Suffice it, for now, to say I was still studying that tradition and working its implications through my inner life ten years later. I enjoyed many adventures; they might one day make a very interesting book.

The fruit of the first phase of research manifested in *The Golden Builders: Alchemists, Rosicrucians and the First Free Masons*. This book appeared

nine years after I had embarked on a detailed study of Freemasonry, a tradition that owes a great deal to the lines of thought and tradition dubbed "Rosicrucian" (see also my *Freemasonry: The Reality*). However, there is still a lot more to communicate. A great deal of first-class scholarly work has been accomplished since the time of the *Gnostics* series, now nearly a quarter of a century ago.

The researches of the uncrowned king of Rosicrucian studies, Carlos Gilly, have taken the subject completely out of its former residence in occult discourse and set it firmly in the world of concrete social, bibliographical, and philosophical history. It makes sense now in a way undreamed of by writers on the subject only a century ago. French scholar Roland Edighoffer has applied great sensitivity and psychological and philosophical insight to the subject, illuminating the creative mind of the imaginary fraternity's creator, Johann Valentin Andreae, as never before.

Susanna Åkerman has taken her own track through the manifestations of Rosicrucian influences in the Baltic countries and through northern Germany, while Christopher McIntosh and Renko D. Geffarth have shown the historical reality behind the eighteenth-century Gold- und Rosenkreuzer (Gold and Rosy Cross) movement in a series of penetrating and revealing analytical studies.

The work advanced under the editorship of Wouter Hanegraaff (chair of Hermetic Studies, University of Amsterdam) and his team of contributors in producing the world's first *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* has brought great swaths of gnostic and neo-gnostic history before the gaze of scholarship. The last twenty-five years has been a golden age for Gnostic and associated Rosicrucian scholarship, and I am very glad to have been able to play my part in it.

In 2005, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke succeeded in establishing the U.K.'s first graduate course in Western Esotericism at the university of Exeter. He kindly invited me to write the course modules on Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry and to join the faculty, lecturing to growing numbers of students. Without that experience, I am sure this book would not have been written.

The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians is a second portion of the first fruit of a new era in esoteric scholarship, an era for which I may now say I

should have been far less fit had I not first received a solid education in orthodox or Catholic theology. The circle has been joined, a possibility I could only have dreamed of thirty years ago. The esoteric belongs with the exoteric and vice versa.

Esoteric, by the way, refers to knowledge of the inner nature of things. This knowledge comes when a person has an insight opened to the inner eye either by another person or by gift of insight and initiation. A person with esoteric knowledge has entered into a mystery (or what appears to the outside or exoteric world as a mystery) and may therefore be described as a *mystic*. A mystic is someone initiated into an interior mystery. Liberating knowledge peculiar to the mystic is gnostic knowledge, or *gnosis*. As St. Paul said, "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." Those without esoteric experience can tell you little about the meaning of the word and thus are quite likely, in my experience, to disparage it.

We have nevertheless come a long way since the days when close familiarity with esoteric subjects was considered objectionable by much of the Western academic status quo.

It is now time that the general reader gain access to the best of what has been discovered in the exciting field of Rosicrucian research during the last quarter of a century. This provision has been my principal aim with this book: to throw open a window on a wondrous vista of previously unseen history and experience. The mysterious story of Rosicrucianism, told through its dominant characters, is, I believe, a marvelous and important story, revealing much that is significant with regard to all our pasts and much about ourselves, our truly human nature.

It goes without saying that aspects of the true story, often skewed, garbled, mythic, or plain fanciful, have been pushed onto the stage of a now notorious "alternative history." This alternative history has seized the public's attention in a series of books promising every kind of revelation, recently synthesized and manifested in a skillfully told bestselling novel, *The Da Vinci Code,* by Dan Brown.

While it might be argued that fiction is where this pseudo-revelatory material properly belongs, it is worth bearing in mind two things. First, the public interest may demonstrate a justifiable hunger for the "real thing" that has otherwise not been catered for by conventional religious authorities.

Second, the Rosicrucian story itself began with a fiction, a game, even a naughty alternative history. History is often made by the operation of actualized myths, potent forces that link into unconscious life. Myths are powerful. Only saints are prepared to suffer for the plain truth.

The fundamental approach taken in this book is that of an investigation.

The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians is a narrative of questions as well as statements of evidence and comparisons of interpretation. I have tried to take nothing for granted, and to give the chief players their own voice, wherever pertinent and possible. This has been a demanding task; much of Rosicrucian history has until recently consisted of little more than a perpetual (and sometime shameless) accretion of mythology. You can write about Rosicrucianism as a series of, or collection of, mythologies. I have preferred to see the story as a series of scenarios shaped by dominant individuals. Following the impact of those dominant minds on sympathetic groups, we may then observe those groups working with and reacting to the inherited knowledge and traditions. From those groups have emerged new dominant individuals to continue the process of tradition, reaction, innovation, and development.

The work and motives of both individuals and groups are, where evidence permits, open to investigation. This book thus represents a critical investigation into that evidence. I wish to answer the hardest questions that the subject has to offer while leaving definitive judgment to the mind of the reader: no mean balancing act.

Another unusual challenge to be encountered when writing on this subject lies in the fact that we are investigating the activity of so-called invisibles. This word does not apply only to commonly held superstitions regarding the Rosicrucians themselves while in this world, but also to numinous figures frequently held to be pulling the strings from another dimension. There are numerous invisible factors inseparable from the fabric of the historical record.

The Rosicrucian movement is essentially a spiritual movement; its hold on the human imagination has been from within. The movement’s appeal is rooted deeply in the unconscious dimensions of the mind. Carl Jung, who had so much to teach us about the unconscious, was nevertheless of the opinion that he was only projecting a narrow beam of light into a cavernous realm

that for the most part remained unexplored. This mysterious aspect of the story poses all kinds of interesting problems for the rational narrative-maker; science abhors mystery.

There is a tendency in some “Rosicrucian” minds to assume a position as far apart from material reality as possible. This position, stronger in some Rosicrucian traditions than others, is open to criticism even from within the movement’s own traditional premises. Surely, the foundation documents of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood maintain that its principal *raison d’être* was to acquire a universal knowledge whose implicit benefit included the ability to heal the sick, *gratis*. There has always been in Rosicrucian traditions a world-reforming role. Such a role requires constant interplay with the world and its weaknesses, so long as it exists, even if the good work should be cloaked in invisibility.

Should the Rosicrucian Brotherhood depart from this world entirely, the brotherhood itself would be the poorer for it; purposeless, it could only dissolve into a tedious eternity. Spiritual light might be very boring if light is all there is. Color, contrast, and dynamism give the Rosicrucian story its interest to human beings. The belief that one has become more than human usually entails becoming something less than human. Christianity, as Dean Inge once wrote, is a divine life, not a divine science.

There was a lot of science in the first Rosicrucian movement, as we shall see. However, when the science has been confused with theological categories, the result has often been a kind of spiritual anemia: arid theosophic systems that short-circuit the brain and render remote the voice of the soul. The result is an arrogant intolerance of the created world and its foolish denizens. It is little wonder, then, that the abode of the “secret Chiefs” is often sited in the remotest parts of the world—the once impenetrable Himalayas, for example. Any “Secret Chief ” worth his salt today had better get on the streets if he wishes to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, it appears that the invisibles, like their servants, are just born romantics, preferring the tower, the cavern, and the desert fastness to the teeming malls, private estates, government housing projects, slums, and back streets of sinful humankind. Can you blame them?

In fact, these imaginary locales of the superhuman tell us everything about the nature of Rosicrucianism; these are interior landscapes belonging to inner

planes of consciousness. The mountain, the cavern, and the desert place are archetypal images of divine—or demonic—encounter. We have every reason to be wary of supposed Masters of the Universe. We already know far more than we are aware of.

There is, however, a real, possibly universal, need at the root of the Rosicrucian myth. If the brotherhood did not exist, we should have to invent it. In doing so, we should only be confirming the existence of the real one.

Of such paradoxes is this magical—and true—story made.

What began as a game became a religion. This book shows how and why it happened.

ONE

THE STARS

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

JOEL 2:28–32

Our connection to the stars is profound. We spend all our lives under their passionless gaze and, when feeling ambitious, speak of reaching for them. People in love "wish upon a star," while in Hollywood and elsewhere, people worship them in human guise. The real stars, of course, rather like old-fashioned royalty, never come significantly closer to us, nor we to them. Where there is distance, there is respect. The stars, being far above us, suggest closeness to God, so our ancestors believed. The stars look down on us; we must look up to them. Deduction: the stars were close to God's High Table and deserved worship.

Even today, when we know that the distance between ourselves and the stars is so great as to induce more indifference than respect, many of us find the idea of God inseparable from our vision of the stars. Infinity is

incomprehensible, beyond our understanding. Is not God supposed to be like that?

Everyone knows the story of the Christmas star that announced the birth of the Christian savior. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that magi from “the east” saw “his star” and “followed it” to Judea.

A remarkable stellar sign announced the beginning of Christianity. Far from being mythological, as has often been supposed, the story of the magi interpreting the “new star” and investigating its import is probably one of the most historically likely events recorded in the Christian Bible. Indeed, something very similar seems to have happened at the beginning of the spiritual movement known as Rosicrucianism.

It happened in the year 1603, four years before the planting of Jamestown initiated the beginnings of the United States of America. And, in the intellectual world of Europe at that time, a revelation in the night sky carried tremendous power.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REVELATION

In the early seventeenth century, knowledge about the universe and humankind’s place in it derived, as it does today, from daily experience, observation of nature, and scientific testing of hypotheses. However, two further means of gaining knowledge dominated the schools, universities, and popular mind. The first was the power of inherited tradition, often handed down from ancient Greek and Roman times, and frequently employed—and tempered—with the all-important blessing of the Bible. The second and most controversial senior source of knowledge was divine revelation. Divine revelation provided the blessing—and the meaning.

It was universally allowed that it was God who revealed (or obscured) his creation to the human mind. The laws of the universe reflected God’s will. He made it; he wrote the rules. However, beyond the relatively slim volume of known rules lay a dimension of action that people recognized as being miraculous. Their expectations could be shattered by miraculous interventions of God’s will. Such occurrences threw people back into a position of awestruck dependency, mindful of the perils of sin and the need for salvation. In short, whatever humans might discover by themselves, the

most significant knowledge came from God's revelation.

Humans could measure, but only because God had made the archetypes of measurement. He dispensed this knowledge through his Son and through the angels (or messengers) who ruled the stars and the planets beneath his throne.

The universe was rational because it expressed God's mind; the cosmos had been measured into being. God enlightened the "higher reason" (*intellectus*) of the wise; humankind's ordinary capacities of reason were not autonomous and were limited, as humans without God were woefully finite, even damned. The wise relied on wisdom from above. They needed inspiration.

Inspiration means the spirit, breath, or life of divine intelligence coming into the person. God was the "stone" that fell on the fortunate wise, winnowing their minds—separating the wheat from the chaff, the gold from the dross. If the inner cup was clean, God could pour his new wine into the truly open mind of the savant. This experience gave the individual dramatically increased powers of perception. Higher knowledge and spiritual experience were thus inseparable.

For those blessed with the eyes to see, aspects of the divine mind could be found expressed within nature. As both Genesis and Aristotle taught, without God's creative hand, matter was formless, a void. Real knowledge of the universe was knowledge of God's creative being and will. This knowledge was invisible to men and women in their ordinary, unenlightened condition.

Our word *rational* comes from a Latin word meaning "calculation." Our dim calculations were seen as shadows or copies of God's mighty, pristine calculations. Mathematically speaking, God worked with infinite series; humans, being mortal, could only really comprehend finite series. God was the Master, we were the pupils with the copybooks. The creation was writ with God's radiant finger on the blackboard of space. The universe was a manifestation—a projection—of God's creative nature, his Wisdom. Wisdom could be discerned throughout the cosmos, and it was a wise person who sought it. Science was a province of wisdom. That explains why the magi (members of a tribe of astronomers) are known to us as "the wise men." They followed the patterns of wisdom, discernible in the stars.

The universe was a book: an open codex or mystic scroll; the stars could be *read*.

Reading the celestial text was possible because the planets moved. The planets were observed as moving from constellation to constellation—and the planets moved in relation to one another. Take Venus, for example. Sometimes she would rise into view just before the sun rose in the east; sometimes she appeared as the sun set in the west. Equipped with four compass points, a background of observable stars—and occasional "guest stars" called comets—and seven moving bodies (the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), the ancient astronomers had all the players necessary for an amazing nightly drama series—and, what is more, everything that happened out there was, in the profoundest sense, reflected in life here on earth, the apparent center of it all. Life was one, and its essence was movement.

As above, so below . . . that was the ancient principle. Our lives mirrored the heavens. If you knew how to read the celestial text, the truth was, indeed, *out there*. While for mystics the truth was not only discerned by external observation, the kingdom of the heavens was, at the same time, *within you*. If you looked hard enough and were graced with divine revelation, you would see how the workings of the stars and planets were reflected in the mind and the body, in the soul and the spirit. God's creative Wisdom was all-pervading. The wise person followed it, tracing its wanderings both without and within.

God's Wisdom was sometimes personified as the female figure Sophia (Greek for wisdom). Sophia's visible body was the night cloak of stars. This idea came through the Hebrew books of Psalms, Proverbs, and other, more mystical sources where "Lady Wisdom" had adventures in the cosmos of which she was cocreator. Lady Wisdom came as the world-stranger, negated, despised, or simply unseen by the blind folly of humans, but to those who truly recognized the value of her services, virgin or whore, her price was far above rubies. Giving herself freely to all who sought her and were worthy of her, Lady Wisdom remained ever pure, virgin spirit, wise mother, wife, sister, whore.

So, without God's enlightening power, measurements by themselves had only superficial meaning, and the wisdom of the world was incomplete. Deeper meaning came from deeper knowledge, and this deeper knowledge came from revelation. The primary source of revelation for humankind was

the Bible, interpreted by God's chosen ministers. In the biblical books of Wisdom, you could read about the divine Sophia. After that, revealed knowledge had an earthly, practical aspect called *scientia* (science) and a spiritual aspect we might call *gnosis*—the Latin and Greek words for "knowledge," respectively. Spiritual knowledge came to the spiritual receptive faculty, known as the *intellectus* (spiritual mind or intellect); practical knowledge came to the rational faculty of the soul, called the *ratio*. The calculations of the soul's mind were regarded as inferior to the wisdom of the intellect.

The relative claim of these secondary sources of knowledge was continually debated. Mystical knowledge and scientific knowledge could both find themselves in competition with the church. It was therefore customary to couch new discoveries in the language of the Bible and other recognized written authorities. The church demanded the right to interpret all forms of knowledge.

Men of learning did the best they could with the situation, often having to shadowbox with ecclesiastical authority. A powerful patron was de rigueur; this made the universities highly dependent on the goodwill of princes and the aristocracy, a situation encouraging subtle and not-so-subtle corruption. Granted the privilege to do so, the learned could investigate the natural revelation. Once the wise one had learned to apply the knowledge of nature—especially in the realms of physics and mathematics—he had at his disposal what was generally called "natural magic." (The word *magic* came from the science of the "magi.") Modern science emerged from natural magic, though not always peaceably.

Natural magic did not depend on obtaining favors from demons or angels but on a rational knowledge of nature's laws obtained through virtue, hard work, and, above all, God's grace. Revelation occurred when God took something formerly occluded or hidden from ordinary human understanding and "revealed" it, or made it make sense to the human mind—when, that is, *he* chose to.

Knowledge was revealed in accordance with a divine timetable known only to the angels. The wise person's mind had to be morally and spiritually ready for divine enlightenment. In principle, the wise person's consciousness, or awareness of reality, could be expanded in an ascending series, so long,

that is, as the person's will and God's will were in harmony. Furthermore, while special stellar alignments and conjunctions in space could be seen as the moments when the divine calendar marked a change (leaving the future calendar still unannounced), the ingenuity of the astronomer enabled the possibility of *predictions*, due to the rational nature of the heavens. Alignments and conjunctions appeared at periodic, calculable intervals.

The line between prediction and prophecy is a very thin one, as we shall soon see.

THE REFORMATION

The so-called Reformation of the Western Christian Church began in Germany under Martin Luther's inspiration in 1517. Unfortunately, the whole church was not reformed but, in fact, split up. Not that many Protestants saw it that way. They took the view that *they* were the true church and the Roman Church (like the Babylon that had divided the Hebrews from their homeland) was a corrupted husk from which they had been freed, by the grace of God. "Babylon," they believed, as so many other idealistic hopefuls before and since have believed, would soon fall.

Liberation from Babylon-Rome was not the end of the matter. Protestant men and women in Europe believed that their liberation had rendered them more open to God's favor and gifts. The new Christian had come out of darkness into the light. Protestants were now, they believed, in a better position to hear God's authentic voice than Roman Catholics. If you could hear God's authentic voice, then you could speak it; you could *prophesy*. You could be a prophet—and sixteenth-century Europe had more prophets than all the books of the Hebrew Bible put together.

In liberating the Bible—now revealed in the native language and sense of the populace—from the church's control, the reformed movements opened the way for the liberation of the angelic and prophetic voice, after centuries of Roman suppression. The voice of the Spirit—and the spirits—could now be heard in Protestant territory (mostly northern Europe) without Vatican interference.

And the voice of the Spirit—the flavor of revelation—could not only be tasted in moral and ethical messages (in the development of apostolic

puritanism and inward piety); it could also be drunk from the leaf and soil and stream and sky as German theosophy (the philosophy of man, God, and nature) was combined with sympathetic new science. That is to say, there was another liberated and prophetic voice emerging from the political tumult of the Reformation. For those who cared about such things, humankind was now—at least potentially—back in touch with God's communicating universe. Wonder-works could now be expected.

By 1595, German alchemist Heinrich Khunrath (1560–1605) could declare that the Word was made flesh in the womb of Nature, as well as in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. It was, in short, the belief of a small number of highly educated people in Europe that the new evangelical freedom led directly to scientific freedom.

Christ was not only up there crucified on the high altar, or beyond the fixed stars on God's right hand, Christ was in the heart of the believer, and once enthroned in the center of man's being, Christ could be found everywhere, for Christ was the Mind of the universe who had drunk the milk of holy wisdom and become all-wise.

"Split a piece of wood, and you will find me there; lift up a stone and you will find me there, for the kingdom of heaven is spread out upon the earth, but men do not see it," as the (then unknown) Gospel of Thomas puts it.

The Christian Bible was not, as biblical fundamentalists have asserted, the only source of divine revelation. God's Word—God's Mind—was also revealed in nature, on Earth, and in realms beyond this globe. This insight was hardly new—and was certainly not a product of the preaching of the most famous reformers. However, in the general freeing up—even occasional anarchy—of religious discourse that followed Luther's first stunning rebellion, the voices of Continental magi—or scientists—began to be heard more clearly.

Theirs was a new, unexpected voice. "Seek and ye shall find," they cried (quoting Jesus), not just "Sit down and think what you're told to think"!

Get out there and find things out! Christ, they believed, held the torch for scientific liberty. Was not Christ, after all, a "natural magician," a wonder worker? *Seek and ye shall find*—the very action-principle of science!

This little-known phenomenon of the so-called Reformation partly

explains the Catholic Church's frequent hostility to new scientific discoveries and interpretations, such as the heliocentricity written about by Copernicus from his study of the planets (publication was delayed until after his death for fear of persecution by the church).

The point is that science had come to represent what the old church could only see as a competing source of revelation. The fact that nearly all the major protesting churches took on similar proprietorial attitudes to revelation explains much of the tension between theology and science experienced around the world to this day.

THE LAST LIGHT

It had long been a staple of Christian apocalyptic beliefs that before the almighty finally wound up the scroll of the created—and fallen—universe, there would be a fabulous golden age, sometimes called the "Last Light," associated with a massively expanded realization of the free, godly spirit, and of spiritual reality everywhere.

In this Last Light, God would pour out his hidden knowledge of the universe. Taken up in the fiery foam of revelation, humankind would acquire vastly increased knowledge of the cosmos, of themselves, and of their ultimate destiny.

The Answer was at the End.

This idea may come as a surprise to some readers, for today we tend to think of the word *apocalypse* as linked inseparably to the image of Armageddon, a holocaust and horror story for our planet—an image that curiously attracts many people who bear grudges against the world, its inhabitants, and possibly themselves.

The word *apocalypse* means to take something out of hiding, to reveal something formerly hidden. "Occult" knowledge was only occult to, or occluded from, those not granted the eyes to see it. Thus, for the redeemed, the apocalypse was not something to be feared, but something to be longed for—a great enlightenment. The light would be preceded by signs, like morning stars before the rising sun.

There were all kinds of signs to be expected and to be perceived in the wake of Luther's revolt against the power of the Roman Church. One of the

signs was doubtless the outward expression of an evangelical, inner joy in the presence of the Holy Spirit: happy people, freed from sin and dancing merrily with God. Signs of spiritual liberty (which might include great clarity of mind or deep spiritual awareness) were especially observable among the followers of so-called radical reformers such as Caspar Schwenckfeld (1489–1561) and Sebastian Franck (1499–1542), among many others held in suspicion by more orthodox reformers such as John Calvin and Martin Luther.

While Calvin and Luther had great institutional concerns (running churches), the radical reformers looked away from the "church of wood and stone" to the total renovation and revelation of the spiritual being hidden within material humanity. The spiritual radicals' idea of being "reborn" was not just a sudden moral turnabout and a pledge of good behavior accompanied by a temporary ecstasy in the "blood of the Lamb," followed by a life of religious conformity as insurance against ultimate destruction. Spiritual rebirth for the radicals involved a totally transformed conception of the human being and his or her perception of the cosmos; it was to be a new god, the inner *logos* (divine "word" or mind) *realized as microcosm,* in touch with the universe, clothed in new, progressively spiritualized flesh: a transformation of fleshly lead into spiritual and psychological gold. The new Man would be like the old Adam—*before* he fell.

This was all heady stuff, and there was more to come.

The Reformation can hardly be separated from other movements stemming in part from fifteenth-century Italy and later called collectively the Renaissance, or rebirth, of classical, ancient learning. As well as new prophets, the sixteenth century saw new artists, new scientific discoveries, a new medical and spiritual revolution around the works of Swiss doctor and magus Paracelsus (1493–1547), not to mention a host of geographical, philosophical, and astronomical discoveries and novelties. Had it not been for poverty, disease, persecution, and war, it could have been an unalloyed joy to be alive—like our own time, perhaps.

The sixteenth century definitely seemed to be leading somewhere—even perhaps to the end of the world, or the beginning of a new one. But who could be sure?

There was widespread disquiet as the early 1600s rolled in; Europe was still bitterly divided, poverty was rife, doubt was in the air, and war was

never far away.

Perhaps the Last Light would not last long.

Within a century of Columbus setting foot on what came to be called the New World, Europe itself had also become a new world, in many respects unrecognizable to the viewpoint of someone—like Columbus—born before Luther. Indeed, much of the gold and silver of the New World now lay in the princely coffers and merchant banks of the old. And while desperate adventurers still dreamed of El Dorado in the Americas, new treasures were expected to be discovered in Europe, imminently; there were prophecies to prove it.

JOHANNES KEPLER AND THE NEW STARS

In 1601, Johannes Kepler succeeded Tycho Brahe as imperial astronomer to the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II of Bohemia. Rudolf was a great patron of scientists of many kinds and has gone down (and up) in history as an enlightened monarch who granted freedom of religious observance to Protestants in Bohemia. His enemies thought he was mad; Rudolf seemed more interested in alchemy than in the political challenges of his time.

Kepler (1570–1631) has gone down in history as the man who discovered, among other things, the elliptical movement of planets, replacing the ancient model of perfect circular movement.

The “mad” emperor put the Hradcyn Observatory in Prague at Kepler’s disposal, and it was there on December 17, 1603, that Kepler observed a very close conjunction of the planets Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces. At its closest, the conjunction involved only one degree of angular separation between the planets: about twice the diameter of the sun to the observing eye.

A conjunction takes place when planets appear close to one another. When planets come close together (from the point of view of the observer) three times in one year, it is called a triple conjunction. Such a triple conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter occurred (in Pisces) between May and December in the year 7 BC, the period which, surviving evidence suggests, would be the most likely time of Jesus’s birth, given that the stories of stellar peculiarities associated with that birth are more or less true. The conjunction itself was not

a story; it was a calculable fact.

Kepler recognized that the conjunction of December 1603 might have astrological significance and consulted the records of Jewish astronomer Rabbi Isaac Abarbanel, whose commentary on the book of Daniel, *The Wells of Salvation*, was completed in 1497. Abrabanel observed that conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter were significant, occurring every twenty years in a different zodiacal constellation. The significance depended in part on the constellation in which the conjunction occurred.

Abarbanel reckoned a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces foretold important occurrences with a special significance for Israel. Abarbanel stressed the importance of the magnitude or closeness of any conjunction, outlining five classes of conjunction whose significance rose in proportion to the rarity of the occurrence: from 20 to 60 to 239 to 953 to 2,860 years or so. A mighty conjunction (one in Pisces would be mighty), called *mahberet'asumah,* signified the birth of great prophets, miracle workers, revealers of secrets, and even the Messiah.

Kepler was not entirely convinced by the interpretations or the calculations of the rabbi but nonetheless recognized that the conjunction was significant and worth writing about. The imperial astronomer noted the similarities to the time of Christ's birth in his book *De anno natali Christi* (on the year of Christ's birth), suggesting the conception of Mary took place in 7 BC, with Jesus's birth occurring in 6 BC. The idea was rejected by theologians, who were not really interested in speculations that meant the Christian calendar was six or seven years in error; surely Providence would not permit such a thing.

However, the game was not yet played out, for it appears that it was not so much the conjunction of December 17, 1603, that really excited Kepler, but a massing of planets that occurred not long after, when Mars joined Jupiter and Saturn. The massing reached its highest intensity in September 1604 at the edge of Scorpio and Sagittarius.

The date 1604 will loom large in Rosicrucian mythology.

Kepler reckoned a similar massing had occurred in 7 BC. He took that massing to indicate what was later described as the "star" of Bethlehem and calculated that similar phenomena had coincided with seven other epoch-marking events, beginning with Adam in 4032 BC, followed by Enoch (3227

BC), the Great Flood (2422 BC), Moses (1617 BC), Isaiah (812 BC), Christ (7 BC), Charlemagne (AD 799), and something significant to begin in 1604.

Could it be a new Reformation?

And then, something truly extraordinary happened. In October 1604, as Saturn and Jupiter neared conjunction in Sagittarius, a supernova exploded. To the eyes of the world, it looked as though a new star had appeared out of nowhere.

Kepler first observed the phenomenon on October 9, three degrees to the northwest of Mars and Jupiter and about four degrees east of Saturn. The supernova itself was observed by the public in the constellation of Serpens, the snake, where it remained clearly visible for almost a year. Kepler naturally wondered if it was not this very sequence that had given birth to a new star called the Star of Bethlehem between years 7 and 6 before Christ. Indeed, he was forced to wonder whether it was the earlier massing of the planets that had somehow triggered the appearance of the "new star."

According to astronomical theory, there were not supposed to be new stars at all, since God had made the heavens long before and had done so for all time. Surely it was against every principle of science to think the universe was mutating! The only immediate cause for such an event that would spring to mind to a person of his time was that if it was indeed the revelation of a star, then it was a signal action of God. In print, Kepler modestly speculated that the star might indicate the appearance of a new sect or some significant political event (*De stella nova in pede Serpentario . . . I. De stella incognito Cygni, II. De Jesu Christi servatoris vero anno natalito . . .* , Concerning the new star in the foot of serpentarius . . . I. On the unknown star of Cygnus, II. On the true year of the birth of our savior Jesus Christ . . . ; Prague, 1606).

Kepler was not the only person speculating on the appearance of the "new star." To other stargazers, the idea of the conjunction itself causing the new star to come to birth (as they saw it) suggested a significant triangle. Saturn and Jupiter were, as it were, crowned by the new star. Furthermore, the conjunction was taking place in Sagittarius at the time.

Following the works of the Sabian astronomer Abu Ma'shar al-Balki (AD 787–836), it had become customary to divide the twelve signs of the zodiac into four "trigons." Each trigon grouped three zodiacal signs into each of the four elements. Thus Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius made up the "airy trigon";

Taurus, Virgo, and Capricornus constituted the “earthy trigon”; Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces made up the “watery trigon”; while Ares, Leo, and Sagittarius formed the “fiery trigon.”

As related to the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Sagittarius in October 1604, the new star that had appeared above the conjunction was directly related to the fiery trigon (*trigonus igneus*). According to a system of correspondences that related astrology to alchemy and other sciences, the element of fire, especially with the presence of Mars near the conjunction, suggested several possibilities. Fire is related symbolically to religious inspiration, spiritual prophecy (the fire of the spirit); it is also linked to creativity (alchemical transformation of substance); and it is, of course, related to cataclysm, destruction, and war.

In the light of the options available, Kepler was wise to hedge his bets. All he was reasonably sure of was that something new and of significance to a divine scheme was likely. We now observe a phenomenon that has seldom changed in history.

Whenever a scientist makes a new discovery, a discovery that receives widespread publicity, he or she is most likely to resist “outsiders” commenting on the discovery beyond the discoverer’s initial careful assessment. This urge must be even more intense when the discovery, as in this case, was linked to the notion of interpretation. The scientist is likely to say, “No, that’s going too far. No, we don’t know enough about it yet.” “Calm down, we can’t be sure.” “No, if you don’t understand the science, you’ll get this out of proportion.” “No, this thing is just starting. I know there’s much more to it; give me time, and get off my back.”

Kepler was one of the many scientists of the time who thought partly in what we would call “old ways,” such as that astrology was still bound up with astronomy, and partly in the new, in which measurement and careful weighing of evidence would be used to form ethically neutral hypotheses. This was the period when modern science was born; there was going to be blood on the floor.

Kepler was not happy when many writers began interpreting the scientific facts for themselves. He was soon embroiled in controversy. It is not difficult for us to see Kepler’s point. Kepler reckoned only skilled mathematicians had a serious claim to understand astronomical phenomena. Even skilled

mathematicians should not rush at interpretation, which was, anyhow, a secondary and often doubtful interest. He recognized that astral events soon joined themselves to mythology and came to mean what the writers supposed they meant. In his own time, he knew that mythologies had powerful political and social repercussions. You could not tear religion away from politics, and you could not tear religion away from science. Only four years before Kepler observed the supernova, Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno had been burned at the stake in Rome for his belief that the earth went around the sun and that the universe was infinite, not closed.

In the case of the Rosicrucian phenomenon, we can see, right at its birth, that Kepler had a point, for within two decades of the celestial events of 1604, a Rosicrucian mythology would quickly solidify. The mythology would thrust together into a "mystic whole" a comet (later called a "new star") that appeared in the constellation of the Swan (Cygnus) in 1602, the supernova in Serpens of 1604/5, the conjunction in Sagittarius (*in trigono igneo*), and a heavenly host of other astronomical events and apocalyptic prophecies.

What began as science was turned into a game—and became a religion.

A CONJUNCTION ON THE PONT NEUF, PARIS

Twenty years after Kepler observed the close conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in December 1603, the phenomenon occurred again—right on time.

In 1623, Saturn and Jupiter formed a conjunction in the sign of Leo: Leo the Lion.

This was not without significance. For half a century, learned people and politico-religious propagandists had been excited about the imminent appearance of a kind of Protestant redeemer figure, sometimes identified with a Scandinavian king or German prince, who would complete the Reformation and finish off the "evil empire" dominated by the pope. This figure had been symbolized as the "Lion of Septentrion" or the "Midnight Lion." "Septentrion" means the northern stars or constellations around Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Leo is very prominent in the northern hemisphere, and so a prophecy based partly on words attributed to Paracelsus and partly on prophetic texts in the biblical books Amos and Esdras came to associate the

epiphany of the Midnight Lion with events in the stars.

Furthermore, one of those politico-religious propagandists, a learned man called Simon Studion of Württemberg, had, in a massive work completed in 1604, predicted the date of the Second Advent of Christ. Christ, Studion calculated, would return in the year 1623. Could the Lion and Christ have been one and the same? (A prophecy identifying the two had been made in 1526 by one Jacob Fincelius, humble scrivener of Schmalkalden.)

What Studion did *not* predict was that in 1623, the Thirty Years' War would be raging across Germany, involving the political attentions of all northern European states, as well as France and Spain. The war was a vicious struggle between the Catholic Holy Roman Empire (which included Austria, Bohemia, and Bavaria) and the Protestant states and peoples of Germany. Like all wars, it was full of propaganda.

Simon Studion's home territory of Württemberg was now overrun by a rampaging Catholic army. The Protestant cause looked forlorn. As rebellious Protestants were slaughtered in France, with no sign either of the Midnight Lion or of the second Coming to save them, an otherwise calm Paris suddenly became flustered over the imminent appearance (or disappearance) of groups of people called the Brothers of the Rose Cross. Only these were not really people in the ordinary sense at all. These brothers of the Rose (or Rosy) Cross were, when they chose to be, *invisible*. After Rosicrucian leaflets were posted on the recently constructed Pont Neuf (New Bridge) and placards appeared around the city, it was feared that the devilish invisible ones were some kind of Protestant supermen on a mission impossible: to plot the overthrow of Catholic Europe.

What a difference a couple of decades makes! The last time Jupiter and Saturn had conjoined, these Invisibles had never been heard of. Perhaps they had been invisible *then!* on the other hand, could it be that Johannes Kepler was a better predictor than Simon Studion? While Studion's apocalyptic predictions had been consistently proved wrong, Kepler had modestly suggested that the triple conjunction and supernova of 1604 heralded a significant war, or the appearance of a new sect.

In Paris in 1623, it appeared that Kepler's prediction had come true. There was war, all right, and there was, as Catholic Parisians thought, a new sect—and the war and the sect were connected. And there was a conjunction of

Saturn and Jupiter in Leo, in the fiery trigon—*what did it all mean*?

> We, being deputies of the principal College of the Brothers of the Rose Cross, are making a visible and invisible stay in this city through the Grace of the Most High, towards whom turn the hearts of the just. We show and teach without books or marks how to speak all languages of the countries where we wish to be, and to draw men from error and death.[1]

Commenting on the mysterious declaration, a posse of French writers attempted both to calm nerves and to excite sensational interest in the invisible ones through descriptions that have persisted in popular mythology about the Rosicrucians from that time to this. The late-twentieth-century English horror writer Dennis Wheatley might easily have purloined one of his plots (often turned into popular movies) from the following account:

> We deputies of the College of the Rose Cross, give notice to all those who wish to enter our society and Congregation, that we will teach them the most perfect knowledge of the Most High, in the name of whom we are today holding an assembly, and we will make them from visible, invisible, and from invisible, visible.

The anonymous author of *Horrible Pacts Made Between the Devil and the Pretended Invisible Ones* (Paris, 1623), from which this passage is taken, goes on to describe how thirty-six of the Invisible Ones were placed around the world in groups of six. Of these, six were given a special posting in Paris.

That's a lot of sixes; three would be sufficient to get the idea.

It seems the Devil had indeed ridden out—and in the sign of the blood-red cross as well. Indeed, one of the infernal one's servitors had even appeared in glory at a Grand Sabbath held in Lyon on June 23 to the ecstasy of a collegiate assembly who fell to worship the satanic prince. According to this wholly unsubstantiated account, a pact was sealed whereby, in return for the abjuration of all Christian practices, the deputies would obtain the means to travel anywhere incognito, to never want for cash, and to enjoy the gifts of inspiring eloquence to attract the admiration of the learned, who would consider them wiser than the prophets of old.

Not everyone greeted the Invisible Ones with the salivating relish of a yellow journalist in a vulgar Sunday newspaper. Another anonymous writer of 1623 penned a document entitled *Recherches sur les Rose-Croix* (Researches into the Rose Cross), now in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Ms. *Dupuy* 550), from which the following, more considered and considerably more interesting account is taken:

> The Rose Cross is an imaginative invention by a group of persons who use it as their symbol and mark. Besides this it means nothing. They claim that an ancient wisdom has been transmitted from Adam through Seth, Noah and Moses to Solomon, and that this wisdom was revealed by the Arabs to the foreigners in 1413. . . . It has since been preserved in obscure terms by the alchemists Basilius Valentinus, Theophrastus, Isaac the Hollander, Severinus Danus, Paracelsus, Raymond Lull, Valentin Conrad, and Robert Fludd . . . and the labour of kindred spirits will by a continuous application for one hundred years reach a point where they will reveal themselves to the world as paramount examples of illumination and union. . . .
>
> They believe in a universal agent, which is nothing but an internal fire or general soul that operates among the elements through the three principles Mercury, Salt, and Sulphur [a Paracelsian doctrine]; and claim to be able to confer renewed life to animals and vegetables alike, thus drawing upon the doctrine of Averroes and Theophrastus. Following Paracelsus, they have great knowledge in medicine, narcotics, and alexipharmaka; and through the observance of the stars, they know exactly when to harvest their medical herbs.
>
> Their religion is drawn exclusively from *Genesis*, from the book of *Wisdom*, and the *Psalms* of David, but they approach them with a formal conception to create a semblance that these great personalities wrote only to justify their own belief. In this endeavour they are greatly assisted by their knowledge of the roots of languages.[2]

Whether the Brothers of the Rose Cross were in fact devil worshippers or, as the author of the above study maintained, “Protestant monks, formerly of the Cistercian order, who live on a rock on the shores of the Danube in an almost

inaccessible place," fraternization with their beliefs or literature incurred dire consequences.

Three years before the Invisibles were supposed to have floated about Paris, two students of Marburg University in Hessen, Philipp Homagius and Georg Zimmerman, were tried by the university. Homagius was accused of burning all his books except his Rosicrucian works and a magical textbook attributed to "Arbatel" (*De magia veteri,* On ancient magic; Basel, 1575). Homagius was sentenced to "eternal imprisonment" in a frontier fort.

Meanwhile, the University of Paris condemned all works by, or inspired by, Paracelsus—and that included Rosicrucian works as a matter of course. In the same year as the Parisian scare, Rosicrucian defender and mathematician Heinrich Nollius was expelled from the University of Giessen for his professional interests in sacred magic and hermetic philosophy. Two years later he would try to form a new group, "the Keepers of the Celestial Wheel."[3]

In 1624, a year after the Paris scare, Catholic authorities at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands set up a tribunal to try Rosicrucian writings. The Leiden trials would be followed in Haarlem in 1627 by the trial, torture, and imprisonment of a sometime pornographic artist, Jan Symonsz van der Beek. According to Susanna Åkerman, the Leiden judges "correctly saw that the Rosicrucian fiction stemmed from Arabic magic, from Hebrew wisdom, and from dangerously subversive Paracelsian themes."[4]

That is quite a case for the prosecution. So the Rosicrucian beliefs were a fiction? Why then were people all over northern Europe and elsewhere getting into trouble for paying attention to a fiction? it is not as if they did not have novels in the seventeenth century. They knew the difference between a novel and a serious book. What was it about this fiction that was causing so much trouble? Were the invisibles real, or were they . . . invisible, that is to say, imaginary?

Who were they? Would one of them stand up and be counted? People were, after all, suffering in their name. Even where it was not physically dangerous, mere rumor of association with the Brothers of the Rose Cross could make life very inconvenient. Take the case of (now) world-famous philosopher René Descartes. According to Adrien Baillet's biography (*La vie de Monsieur Descartes,* Paris, 1691), Descartes returned to Paris from his

travels with the duke of Bavaria's army in 1623, only to find the Rosicrucian scare in full force. In fact, Descartes had vainly sought the Brothers of the Rose Cross in the winter of 1619, hoping for help with his internal struggles and obscure mathematical studies. (The Brothers of the Rose Cross had promised a new mathematics.)

A year later, Descartes had met up with an excellent mathematician, Johann Faulhaber, whose less advanced ideas inspired Descartes to new heights of original genius. Faulhaber had been an early defender of the mysterious brothers, having responded eagerly to their promise of a reformed science. Descartes was unlikely to have swallowed the calumnies about satanic brethren invisibly subverting the capital, but he took seriously the advice given him that he was a potential suspect, having returned from Germany by himself, with none to vouch for his activities there—and doubtless being a mathematician and philosopher too. Should he hide? No, he concluded. He made himself visible about town. How, he reasoned, could anyone suspect he was a brother of the Rose Cross? Had not everyone heard? The infernal brethren were *invisible!* Furthermore, he reasoned, having sport with the credulous inquiries of friends, it was that very invisibility that must have prevented his finding the fraternity in Germany!

It is good to know the philosopher had a sense of humor; there are not many laughs in his *Discourse on Method*.

What were people afraid of? Why were even the more enlightened writers, such as Descartes's mentor Father Marin Mersenne and well-informed commentator Gabriel Naudé, so suspicious? What had the Brothers of the Rose Cross *done*?

To find out how such a powerfully subversive group of conspirators had come out of nowhere, only to manifest themselves without manifesting themselves, only to be seen in the imagination while remaining distinctly and indistinctly invisible—only to be dismissed as harmless by some, yet perceived by others as a threat to the stability of the whole Catholic world (and all in the space between two celestial conjunctions)—we need to go back to the beginning of what Simon Studion thought (in 1604) was the end.

TWO

TÜBINGEN AND THE UNIVERSE

What Johannes Kepler did as imperial astronomer in Prague was of great interest to Tübingen University in the German duchy of Württemberg. This is because Kepler was born near Stuttgart in Württemberg, and Tübingen was his old university. Kepler's colleagues took a keen peer interest in his work. For example, Kepler's book on the periodic succession of the great conjunctions, *Mysterium cosomographicum* (The cosmographical mystery), was published in Tübingen in 1596, before he took up his post in Prague. The good name of Tübingen—and the tutors—was at stake when Kepler went to print.

Kepler's old tutor in mathematics at Tübingen was Michael Mästlin, and Mästlin taught mathematics to several other key figures in our story. For example, when academic poet and astro-prophet Simon Studion (born in Urach, Württemberg, in 1543) completed his 1,800-page manuscript *Naometria* in 1604, Studion assured anyone who doubted his amazingly complex computations of an imminent apocalypse that they had all been checked for mathematical precision by Tübingen's very own jewel of mathematics, Michael Mästlin himself.

Naometria means "measurement of the Temple," and the Temple concerned was the spiritual house of God that would emerge apocalyptically from the old world, now nearing its end, according to Studion. Studion combed and interpreted the Bible for every scrap of symbolic and numerical inference, then combined what he found with the history and meta-history of celestial conjunctions.

It should be understood that from the point of view of the biblically

minded Christian believer, everything that happened after the time of the New Testament was, according to the book of Revelation, governed by a time schedule, expressed in symbolic numbers and the traditions of Jewish and Christian Cabala. The infamous “666” is an example of this, but there are many more examples of mysterious numbers that some have taken literally, others symbolically. Interpretations may be as varied as the perturbations of the calculating brain. Problems emerged when commentators named names, tying in the ancient texts with contemporary events, such as the appearance of comets.

Studion’s work was not approved of in the university (there were notable exceptions to this), whereas Kepler was a “good boy,” an alumnus in high standing. That did not mean everyone would agree with his interpretations of celestial phenomena. Nevertheless, what Kepler discovered had ramifications for mathematics, astronomy, theology, and, when we see Kepler’s role in the evolution of scientific knowledge, life on Earth in general.

Kepler’s work was exciting, and universities thrive on talk. Theology was always going to be the sticking point. This is partly why Kepler insisted that only mathematicians could properly understand his discoveries; theology was a dangerous occupation. The problem was that few theologians were interested in truth in the scientific sense; they tended to fall into defensive/aggressive camps, hurling abuse and threats at one another.

Nevertheless, the intersection of science and theology would constitute the battleground out of which the Brothers of the Rose Cross would emerge, if, as yet, unseen. Indeed, there seems little rational ground for doubting that it was the period of debate in Tübingen following Kepler’s observations of the triple conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, and the supernova of October 1604 in Serpentarius, that provided the soil in which the idea of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross grew to fruition. And it is precisely the tumultuous area of intersection between theology and science that gave the Rosicrucian idea its extraordinary multidimensional strength and purpose.

The temporal origin of the Rosicrucian movement lay in questions of science, for sure, but in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries it was practically impossible to keep the controversies of science out of the controversies of theology. Genesis was seen as a scientific handbook written by the all-knowing Moses, touched by the Absolute on Mount Horeb.

Likewise, the position of the sun was a vital matter to religion (theologians thought) because it suggested the way God had planned his scheme of salvation. If the Earth moved, it made the Earth "just another planet." Was God interested in saving Jupiter? From the point of view of the theologian, Earth was the center of God's saving interest, and science ought to confirm this.

As we have seen, scientific discovery was also understood as a form of divine revelation. Much of what we today call "scientific method" reflects this struggle to operate scientifically without fear of the inquisition bursting in and closing down the laboratory for heresy.

Many have argued that in freeing itself from the perceptions of religion, a divine baby was thrown out with the material bathwater, and a reconciliation of science and religion is therefore desirable. Indeed, when some commentators have looked at the Rosicrucian movement (such as Frances Yates in her book *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*), they have perceived that the subject's interest for us today lies in the realization that here was a movement that combined science and religion without denying anything to either, in a holistic universe where matter and spirit interacted. If science had not bitten the hand that fed it, the argument goes, there might never have been an atomic bomb, and gentle hot-air balloons would be the preferred mode of transatlantic passage. This is a heady vision and has found many adherents since people became "friends of the earth" and of esoteric philosophies.

However, there is a problem with this viewpoint. When we investigate what Susanna Åkerman, for example, considers to be authentic Rosicrucian science in her *Rose Cross over the Baltic*, we find that this alleged Rosicrucian science (where science and religion met in amity) was, in fact, no more than a reflection of a number of key scientific assumptions and (sometimes controversial) theories current at the time.

These assumptions and theories became "time frozen" into the web of Rosicrucian mythology, so attached did they appear to be to the very few original statements of the Brothers of the Rose Cross (or, as the authors signed themselves, *fratres R.C.*).

Sympathetic scientists liked the sound of the *fratres R.C.* for a wide variety of reasons. They expressed support for them, while using the brothers' fame

to further their own interests. For example, Johann Faulhaber was a mathematician with very interesting mathematical ideas that he thought fulfilled the prophetic promise of a new mathematics he found in the writings of the *fratres R.C.*

Indeed, the *fratres R.C.* could probably have established a brilliant Continental publishing outfit producing the best of modern science and philosophy, had they not remained invisible. Clearly, money was not their interest.

However, a curious trick has blinded adherents to the Rosicrucian cause ever after. The trick works because it happened that the Brothers of the Rose Cross emerged at precisely the time when modern science was emerging. We can see this phenomenon in Kepler's resistance to overinterpreting the evidence of the supernova, and, a few years later, in Galileo's resistance to the Inquisition regarding the movement of the Earth around the sun. Indeed, some ideas associated with the brothers should be seen as part of this general, halting movement for liberating scientific study from a generalized state into a more systematic and empirical state.

The trouble is that the science current at the time (by its very nature) became attached to the *spiritual movement* of Rosicrucianism in such a way as to be inseparable from it. For example, a person joining a Rosicrucian organization today might be enjoined to study alchemy or to relate organs of the human body to cosmic principles held at a time when people thought it was the blood and not electrical impulses that communicated thoughts and will to the limbs.

The Rosicrucian movement has preserved elements of a scientific view of the cosmos that would otherwise have mostly disappeared. Why there has been a desire to maintain the validity of such ideas is another intriguing question. People have risked—and lost—their lives for these ideas; there may be something in at least some of them.

It is true that Rosicrucian manifestations throughout the four hundred years since the movement began have operated in a scientific time capsule, such that if we wish to understand Rosicrucian spiritual ideas today, a lot of these ideas can be understood when we simply examine the main scientific and theological debate out of which the *fratres R.C.* actually emerged—the debate around the supernova of 1604.

Susanna Åkerman has herself expressed the concern that the "loss of the pre-modern scientific framework has often obscured the Rosicrucian school to such an intolerable degree that it no longer even can be understood."[1] I take this to mean scientifically understood; there are a good number of spiritual commentators on Rosicrucian ideas.

The Rosicrucian ideas were simply premodern scientific ideas.

Indeed, the key Rosicrucian concept most natural to the movement was isolated some 350 years ago by the Czech genius Comenius (1592–1670), when he expressed an initial enthusiasm for "Pansophia" in his masterpiece *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*, written, significantly, in 1623. The drive to create a pansophy was widespread in the seventeenth century: an integration of all knowledge in a single scientific system that included spiritual causes and celestial correspondences—a global, celestial, and supercelestial harmony.

Pansophia was defined by Heinrich Nollius (expelled from Giessen in 1623 for his pro-Rosicrucian stance) as theosophy plus alchemy and astronomy, but in the hands of men inspired by Sir Francis Bacon and the writings associated with the *fratres R.C.*, Pansophia could also mean a universal system of *everything*, with a strong dose of Hermetic, as-above-so-below, all-unifying, universal-in-scope philosophy. Mechanics, music, meteorology, architecture, botany, zoology, archaeology, physiology, agriculture—indeed, the classical seven liberal arts were only parts of the pansophic enterprise.

When we add to this treasury the original medical, physical, and theological theories of Paracelsus, we have pretty much the knowledge-itinerary associated with the original writings of the *fratres R.C.* They were apparently interested in everything. But was it the original intention of the Rose Cross Brothers to form or encourage the formation of a Rosicrucian science?

If it was, then we might expect that the Rosicrucians would hold a worthy name within the context of the history of science; they do not. Take a trip to Oxford's Museum of the History of Science (stored in a museum built at the behest of British Rosicrucian enthusiast Elias Ashmole in the 1670s) and ask the director whether he or she thinks a cabinet should be devoted to the Rosicrucians. I do not imagine that it would be an idea greeted with warmth.

To our modern scientist, “Rosicrucian” suggests “occult,” “spiritual,” “New Age,” “astrology,” “Masonic,” and many other things the modern scientific inquisition (at least in Great Britain) wishes, for the time being, to be kept coolly separate from.

The roots of the problem may be traced in part to the kind of debate that ensued in Tübingen after Kepler’s observations of 1604. Indeed, the nature of the debate seems to have shaped the thinking of the people who gave first (literary) form to the invisibles.

THE SCIENCE

It has been a shortcoming of most works published to date on the Rosicrucian phenomenon that they do not trouble to investigate the science. Consequently, when dealing with, for example, eighteenth-century manifestations of Rosicrucianism, the uninitiated reader’s mind is immediately assaulted by bizarre conceptions, often alchemical in nature and surrounded by zodiacal symbols, that simply look like the “chimaeras of little worth” that the fictional Victor Frankenstein was warned of by his wise tutor at Ingolstadt University, in Mary Shelley’s famous novel of science gone horribly wrong.

While the science was disputed, debated, dismissed, and often repressed in Kepler’s time, arguments over the Bible and the stars were nonetheless regarded as scientific debates—debates of knowledge. To understand the nature of these debates—and what came of them—we need to know something of the science. First of all, we all know that the people of the Renaissance had been taught in childhood that the planets—and the sun—went around the Earth. Beyond the planets were the fixed stars, and beyond the fixed stars were the heavenly realms governed by hierarchies of angels and archangels. Beyond these realms was the mystery and perfection of God, who had created everything with the command *Fiat lux!* Let there be light!

And there was light. And there was quite a lot of darkness, too. Hard knowledge was hard to come by. When Kepler first observed the conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter, he did not have the benefit of Galileo’s 10× magnification telescope; that was still some five years away (1609). Many of the observations of the heavenly bodies that mattered had been

made eight hundred years and more previously, in the Middle East, where Arabic-speaking astronomers also thought the sun went around the Earth.

That idea, at least, was changing, though slowly. Copernicus reckoned the sun's central position was implied by Hermetic philosophy dating back (he thought) to the time of Moses. Hermes the philosopher described the sun as the "visible" and "second" God.

Since God did not go around the Earth, it was not impious to suggest that the Earth might in fact go around the Almighty's solar regent—though in a spiritually perfect circle. Nevertheless, the theologians, by and large, did not like the idea, and even many an honest scientist found it hard to adjust to a concept that appeared counterintuitive when everyone could see the sun (not the Earth) rising in the east and setting in the west. The sun moved; you could watch it. If the Earth moved, why don't we feel it, or fall off? Kepler demonstrated that mathematics worked better than the human eye alone. This showed that God-as-Mind was in the mathematics. That the divine mind was manifest in numbers was also a preconception of Pythagoras and was manifest in the Alexandrian geometer Euclid before the time of Christ. Works by Greek-writing authors were valued in Mesopotamia and Syria while Vikings were pillaging the coasts of Dark Ages Europe.

Greek-written geometry formed the basis of much of the scientific knowledge of the eighth- and ninth-century Baghdad mini-renaissance, fleshed out with original observations and additional, often brilliant, conclusions. Works translated from Arabic to Latin dominated the scientific physics and astronomy of the European Renaissance, as they had the science of the Middle Ages.

The philosophy was largely Aristotle's: matter had no measurable meaning without form, which was implicit by divine fiat in the origin of a thing (the potential in the seed), the particular form derived by degrees from the absolute, beyond-form, above. The energy that created change of form derived from the movement transmitted by the unmoved Prime Mover whose movement was communicated to the powers of the fixed stars. This energy made the planets move. Thus Saturn, the outermost planet (as was supposed), received the first pristine shot of energy from the stars and projected it onto the other planets. That is why Saturn was the star representing the first god of the Greeks (Chronos, or Time) and why Saturn (old Father Time) was

associated by Semitic peoples with the supreme God—literally, “the Highest.”

Saturn could be both the planet of melancholy (meditations on time and age) but also the “humor” of high insight and genius, being closest to the heavenly realms.

How was this energy from the stars communicated? According to Abu Yusuf Ya’qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (born AD 850 in the southern Arabian peninsula), the energy that established movement and change was communicated through rays. We get our word *radiation* from *rays*, and, according to the science of Kepler’s time, a great deal more besides, for it is in the understanding of rays that science and magic became for many scientists inseparable.

Rosicrucianism inherited and transmitted the ancient ray theory.

RAYS

Al-Kindi’s study *De radii* (Concerning rays) gave medieval scientists like Roger Bacon (1214–1294) and Robert Grosseteste (ca. 1175–1253) a scientific explanation for astral and other effects perceived as coming from the stars. “Magical” effects covered inexplicable phenomena of change that were thought to have something to do with the stars. The point was that magical effects (like the power of lenses, mirrors, medicines, or even music) could be explained by a *natural* philosophy. This made those effects licit, that is, tolerable to the church, to a point.

The propagation of astral rays—rays from the stars—was seen as part of natural philosophy; no demons were involved, nothing wicked at all. Once you saw energy being projected from the star as a ray, you could make general assumptions about the rays by applying the time-honored laws of geometry with their scales of number. Numbers indicated not only size but also value, as in ordinary human relations. We call the boss “Number One”; the “lower orders” used to travel third class.

The natural philosophy of rays asserted that the nature of a star was emitted as a ray. The ray expressed the flux of a star; stars received energy and passed it on, according to their nature. The lines were there to be drawn, if not to be seen.

From this supposition, scientists concluded that all events on Earth were the product of all the rays of the heavens touching Earth and penetrating its living organisms, metals, and minerals.

According to the theory, the effects of any given stellar activity could be plotted geometrically with lines and figures. Since this activity was also in some respects a study of light, a mystical and metaphysical atmosphere colored these researches. According to Grosseteste, for example, light was the essential principle of the universe's form and structure. The universe was the result of a union between formless matter and the essence of light, of which visible light was the only aspect available to the human material senses. Other activities of rays were invisible, occluded from ordinary perception. There was light in the dark too; God dwelled in an unfathomable darkness. In a remarkable prescience of modern physics, Grosseteste theorized that light was the basis of spatial dimension and thus of physical extension.

Medieval science also knew of a Neoplatonic and gnostic tradition wherein the human being's essential nature, in its origin or "archetype," was called Light (*Phos*). According to this principle, if the inner nature of a human being was of the same substance as the formative principle of the cosmos, then there was a structural symmetry conceivable between the human and the universe. In the fullness of the human's nature—or fulfilment of his or her potential—the human being was a *microcosm*. The powers at a human being's disposal were therefore, ultimately, unlimited. The "starman," as in David Bowie's popular song, was waiting to be recognized.

Scientists conceived of the possibility of *superman* even when the biggest thing they had to offer was gunpowder. It must have been very frustrating.

Al-Kindi, who was the source of Roger Bacon's initial work on optics, also translated the Neoplatonist Porphyry's commentary on books 4–6 of Plotinus's *Enneads*, thinking them to be the work of Aristotle. The Neoplatonist works had a decidedly more mystical flavor than Aristotle's authentic writings. The human being was not simply the observer of the universe but was in a sense a creator of the universe, insofar as the human *perceived it into being*. According to this idea, the human soul produces the sensible world—the world the human sees and touches—out of the soul's longing to give visible and sensible form to the intellectual forms discerned

by the imagination in the created world. The soul recognizes something of its own, in spite of the limitations of our optical apparatus, since, according to the Neoplatonists, the soul derives its origin from the original expression of the divine mind—and so does the cosmos.

Taking this idea a bit further, we have the idea that the human being's full dimension is *in small* what the universe "out there" is *in gross*. The human being is a little cosmos: a microcosm. The stars are our cousins.

So we can see how a little bit of natural philosophy very soon becomes an inspiring ideal of metaphysical philosophy. However, leaving the metaphysical implications of natural philosophy aside for a while, and returning to geometry, we can see that, as with the case of light, causes of natural effects (growth in plants, for example) could be seen to operate according to lines, angles, and figures—the stock-in-trade of the geometer.

By using geometry as a means of plotting and discussing ray effects, differences between phenomena depended for their scientific expression on the laws of optics and perspective. Thus, geometric optics became the basis for a mathematical theory of nature. It all looked pretty suspicious to those who did not understand the game.

The insight of a possible mathematical theory of nature, also known as "natural magic" or simply "science" (referring to knowledge of a particular craft or "mystery"), provided the theoretical basis for much of modern science. Practical demonstrations of the theory were in their infancy, but it was understood that there were great things to come, as long as God saw fit to enlighten the wise.

One area of knowledge that gained through the mathematical and geometrical application of the ray theory was astronomy, very much bound into the issues of *value* that made astronomical prognostications inseparable from astrology, the predictive science. How did natural philosophy affect astrology?

The mathematical theory bolstered astrological predictive power by providing a scientific framework for understanding *why* the positions of the stars in relation to the Earth were causative. For example, a stellar "virtue" (the nature of the star emitted as a ray) was thought to act more strongly when concentrated perpendicularly on the Earth. This relative strength could be shown numerically by the higher and lower angles of incidence that occur

when the ray touches the Earth, obliquely or otherwise. Laws of refraction and reflection also inhibited the power or stellar virtue of the ray. These influences could be plotted by number (degrees), giving judgments of magnitude and of value. The greater the distance of the celestial body from the Earth, the narrower the "cone" would be (where the body provided the base, and the Earth the tip), and therefore the influence would be stronger (because more concentrated), depending on its angle of incidence. Thus, astrological influences could be shown as being perfectly natural, even if not *absolutely* determinative. God's will, human will, and meteorological conditions could affect results. Therefore, science had to take the stellar virtues into account; those objects "out there" had meaning because they influenced life on Earth. However, computing them in detail was more theoretically than practically possible, as critics of the theory (such as Nicole Oresme, ca. 1320–1382) observed.

Mathematics, then, had a dual character, both as natural philosophy and as divine science. Kepler, for example, could not deny that some kind of effect could be expected from celestial conjunctions, but who was best placed to know what precisely might be expected—and on what grounds?

Kepler argued from the principle that an increase in knowledge of mathematical and physical laws—from repeated observations and experiment (experience)—was necessarily generated as illumination increased in an ascending knowledge scheme. Older theories would have to change as illumination brought greater perspective. Kepler and the natural science wing of prediction were aware that there was still a great deal more to know, and biblical computations could be as much a hindrance as help, since interpreters of the Bible tended to the belief in immutable constants, often where such appeared irrational. Anyhow, it was hard enough to assess the science, never mind the symbolism!

This reticence becomes immediately apparent when we come to look at Kepler's debate with his acquaintance and friendly rival Hesilaus Röslin (1554–1616), a skilled stargazer who used much of the same inherited science as Kepler did, but who came to a very different kind of conclusion. Since Röslin's conclusion has become associated with the magical-apocalyptic wing of early Rosicrucian interpreters, we need to look a little deeper into the knowledge base shared by Röslin and Kepler.

ABU MA’SHAR AL-BALKI

The most important work common to Kepler and Röslin was a work first printed at Augsburg in 1489, *De magnis coniunctionibus et annorum revolutionibus* (On the great conjunctions and cycles of the ages) by Abu Ma’shar (AD 787–886), or Abumasar, as he was known to many Western writers. It was Abu Ma’shar’s work that laid out the four elemental “trigons” discussed earlier and bound them to issues of prediction.

It is significant that Abu Ma’shar’s work reflected the teachings of Sabians from Harran in northeastern Syria and (possibly) Yemen who were active in Baghdad in Abu Ma’shar’s lifetime. Abu Ma’shar himself came from Khorasan (the land of the sun) in northeastern Iran and what is now western Afghanistan.

The Harranian Sabians worshipped the seven planets (including the sun and moon) in seven temples whose foundations went back far into pre-Christian history. They were tolerated by Muslim religious authorities because they were seen as “people of the Book” who accepted belief in a supreme God and a last judgment.

The Sabians’ “book” was a collection of Greco-Egyptian writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, identified also as Idris or Enoch, and composed during the heyday of Neoplatonism in late antiquity (second, third, fourth centuries AD). Hermes enjoyed great currency in the medieval and Renaissance annals of knowledge because he was seen as a kind of pagan Moses who had predicted Christ—and, of course, because of the wonderful things he wrote.

Hermetic writings often spoke of God as a universal Mind that was present in everything and which yet transcended everything, and humans could have a portion of this Mind (*nous*) if they chose to heed the call and immerse themselves in it (the analogy for this was baptism in a special bowl sent from heaven). The potential for response was there in practically everyone, but most ignored it. Those who did not received *gnosis*, or divine perception, the ability to grasp the invisible as well as the visible—and thus were able to rise above mere material existence. Hermes became master of the unseen universe, in humans, in nature, and in the stars above. Hermes joined alchemy to astrology and humans to God. The Latin form of Hermes was

Mercurius, divine messenger and transformative quick-change artist par excellence. In the words of Paracelsus, “There are as many mercuries as there are things.”

Abu Ma’shar’s work, influenced by Hermetic concepts, was translated into Latin in about 1120 by John of Seville, at a time when the only Hermetic works known in their entirety in the West were the *Asclepius* and the *Emerald Table* of Hermes Trismegistus, an alchemical text.

As well as the astronomical traditions of the so-called Sabians (a word from the Koran with no absolutely certain definition), Abu Ma’shar could also draw on the Greek Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* (The book of four), which discussed how the germination and fruition of the seeds of plants and animals were molded by celestial influences. This teaching was easily allied to concepts of alchemy (which also depended on the stars) and Aristotelian theories of formation and de-formation. These conceptions are not in principle very far from modern ideas of mutation through radiation effects on the chemistry of DNA.

Since everything was seen to be made up of combinations of four elements, we can see how a fiery trigon, watery trigon, earthy trigon, or airy trigon might in principle affect human and terrestrial history. We can also see how the theories could be applied to timetables for the end of the world, with new trigon schemes relating to the superior planets marking movements toward the final celestial revolution, when the Almighty would wrap up the system.

Abu Ma’shar’s work was enormously influential on the sixteenth-century apocalyptists and scientists John Dee (*Monas hieroglyphica*, The Hieroglyphic Monad; 1564), Cyprian Leowitz (*De coniunctionibus magnis*, Concerning the Great Conjunctions; 1564), Johannes Trithemius (*De septem secundadeis intelligentijs sive spiritibus orbes post Deum moventibus*, Concerning the seven secondary intelligences or the spirits of the world after the movements of God; 1547), Guillaume Postel (*De nova stella . . . judicium*, Judgment on the new star; 1573), Jacob Brocardo (*Mystica et prophetica libri Levitici interpretatio*, Mystical and prophetic interpretation of the book of Leviticus; 1580), and others who wished to stretch the science of their time both to and beyond its limits.

In a letter from John Dee to Queen Elizabeth I’s chief minister, Robert

Cecil, in 1562, Dee explained that the highest vocation of the philosopher or adept lay in the explanation of "supercelestial virtues and metaphysical influences" through a combination of magic, Kabbalah (Jewish *gnosis*), and alchemy. These interests were fundamental to the reform of the world promised in the first Rosicrucian writings. Dee's book on the sign or hieroglyph of cosmic unity, *Monas hieroglyphica*, went through at least ten German editions before 1610.

To the mind of Dee and those who shared his visionary as well as practical outlook, the secrets of the universe were primarily invisible. The adept or magus-scientist could, in theory, uncloak the invisible while himself remaining cloaked from the jealous greed of the uninitiated. Privileged access to knowledge was a keynote of the science of the period, and Kepler might be distinguished from the apocalyptic interpreter in this regard mainly by his belief that the "pure" mathematician was more privileged (and more accurate) than the symbolic interpreter. That is to say that while we can see the Kepler debate beginning in 1604 as a marker (in retrospect) of a growing attitude in science (realized more fully by Descartes and his followers), magical and empiricist attitudes were still inextricably—and creatively—mixed.

For example, while John Dee (1527–1608) believed that the universe was rational and governed in its operation by natural law (only its initial creation violates reason), he was still deeply interested in works that combined natural philosophy with "straight magic" of the angelic, even demonic, kind. Known throughout Europe as an authority on Euclid, Dee also inherited and applied a concept first used by the alchemist Thomas Norton (*Ordinal of Alchemie,* 1471), namely, *archemastrie*.

Dee and many like him simply ignored the fact that alchemy had practically no disciplinary status in universities (it would in the future) and took Norton's term, which meant "full mastery," to mean investigation by experience, or "experiment." This not only meant the careful recording of data and tentative hypothetical approach to knowledge that we understand today as the experimental method. *Archemastrie* could mean any experience that provided knowledge, including spiritual and psychological experience, since these took place within the reality of the mind operating at what was considered its highest pitch.

As geometry and ray theory had helped formulate an astrology and

astronomy based on natural causes, it was supposed that science would eventually penetrate the natural laws operative in things that offered no immediate rational explanation.

Thus Dee and others of a similar outlook joined to their natural philosophy works such as the magical compendium *Picatrix* (originally the Arabic work *Ghayat al-hakim*). *Picatrix* explained how to attract celestial spirits into talismans (at the right astrological moment), along with a ceremonial demonic magic operating on the Neoplatonic principle of a spiritual continuity and sympathy existing throughout the universe.

A work similar to *Picatrix* was that infamous text for possession of which (along with Rosicrucian writings) Marburg student Philipp Homagius was imprisoned in 1620. Arbatel was the pseudonym for the author of a work called *De magia veterum,* which appeared in 1574. Arbatel appealed to those who were hungry for the knowledge that natural philosophy unaided could not provide. Since the stars that projected their nature as rays were each seen to be governed by an angel, then, went the theory, you should be able to obtain superior knowledge direct from the angels themselves.

Enthusiasts looked at the apocalyptic writings in the Bible and elsewhere and saw that it was the angels who showed the keys to the prophets: Uriel, Gabriel, Michael, and other celestial ministers had opened their secret books to the vision of Ezekiel, Daniel, St. John the Divine, Ezra, and Enoch.

The word *angel* is Greek for messenger. If they had a message, those with the ears to hear should hear it—and the angels should oblige. Surely, in this new age of revelation, with the universe crying out for messages from heaven for understanding, surely the angels would, if approached properly, not deny their knowledge to the worthy. After all, was not the human being the microcosm, the bridge between Earth and heaven?

And had not a new age begun?

So instead of being seen as another old medieval *grimoire* for manipulating demons, Arbatel’s work was seen as a ritual-magic text offering a divine revelation through God’s ministering angel: a boon to science. The purpose was high—to restore a lost wisdom. Practitioners might at least, if favored, gain knowledge of the hidden secrets of nature. Through this divine, cabalistic magic, practitioners might escape the bonds of the material world that limited the scope of human understanding and soar in spirit to the

celestial and supercelestial realms, experiencing union with the divine mind and consequent illumination. Such a one could bring the heavenly gift to a wayward humankind, could bring knowledge to the uncertainty of the world, and thus could secure experience of, not just faith in, God.

Such a one might be the harbinger of the return of Christ himself, when all knowledge would be found to be one: a perfect sphere—and Christ would be found to be all within all. This supracosmic vision was either the cutting edge of a new science (or reformed science, as, say, Dee saw it) or a capitulation to Arabic magic, Hebrew mysticism, and the violation of an ordered universe (as the Catholic authorities at the University of Leiden in 1623 saw it). What, for example, was the concept of natural causes to make of Dee's and others' view that celestial virtue (the power of the stars) was vital to transmutation, that the alchemist must work in conformity to the stars and should observe them and the world affected by them constantly?

All the elements were star-sensitive; divine secrets in nature were elusive. At first sight, the idea simply follows from the long established principle of cosmic rays being causative, but in the hands of the new science of the Paracelsians and the revived science of Roger Bacon (revived by John Dee and his contacts from Paris to Prague), the science soon ascended to prophetic magnitudes.

What kind of alchemy, for example, would the supernova of 1604 make possible?

Would a new kind of being appear? Would he change the world? This is not so strange an idea as might appear at first sight. When a new star appeared in Cassiopeia in 1572 (debate about which conditioned much of the response to the 1604 triple conjunction), Kepler's predecessor at Prague, Tycho Brahe, argued against a series of prophecies that had identified the new star as a "cometa rosa." The rosy comet had been mentioned by the Roman naturalist Pliny in his *Historia naturalia* (2,22). Tycho's *De stella nova, anno 1572* (Concerning the new star, Uraniborg, 1593) stated that since Pliny's term *rosa* referred not to a star, but to a comet, it was inappropriate. The "new star" was not a comet.

Kepler, in his 1606 work on the 1604 supernova, was not prepared to push aside the Rosa idea. He was struck by the supernova's rosy appearance (referring in a poem to its "unparalleled redness"). He examined Pliny's term

rosa and believed Pliny was trying to distinguish between the glare from ordinary comets and “an intense radiance, transforming into a spear-like apparition” that might indeed fairly refer to what he had seen in the constellation of Serpentarius.

Abu Ma’shar also wrote on comets and described the Rosa as one of ten types of known comet. Kepler compared notes and identified Abu Ma’shar’s description of it with the 1604 phenomenon. Abu Ma’shar called his sixth category of comet “rosa, because of its rosy colour; it is also large and round as the sun, with the face like a man, a kind of yellow of gold and silver colours mixed.” Abu Ma’shar was clearly describing a dying star, a supernova, mistaking it for a comet.

But there was more to this Rose than met the eye.

According to Susanna Åkerman, medieval Arabic physiologists had also linked the Rosa to Avicenna’s theories of bodily fluids.[2] We are in “elixir of life” territory here, and the following concepts will firmly enter Rosicrucian lore to appear mysteriously, over a century and a half later, to be combined with Mesmerism.

Healthy tissues were thought to contain a fluid called *ros* (Latin for “dew”), which might undergo a kind of transmutation in the wake of such a new star appearing. Think of the history of humankind as a great alchemical experiment or Work, and you will see why Dee, for one, considered life on Earth as being nourished by the fluxions of a heavenly dew, a manna from heaven—the quality of which could alter in response to astral conditions.

The idea of an invisibly transformed fluid did not pass by the followers of Paracelsus. For example, in the Köln 1567 edition of Paracelsus’s *Philosophia Magnae* (Great philosophies), a curious picture may be seen near a portrait of Paracelsus himself. The picture has been taken mistakenly as a proof that the Rosicrucian fraternity existed before the seventeenth century. In the picture, we see a field strewn with books and pages of manuscript. In the foreground a torn sheet bears the words “Rosa” and “Rx.” in the background, a child’s head emerges from the earth (grave?) saying, “What is that?”

Rx is an abbreviation of the word “Response,” used to head alchemical recipes. The child signifies the *reborn*: renewed, perhaps, by the life-

prolonging medicine, an elixir courtesy of the transmuting power of Abu Ma'shar's comet, the fluid-enhancing Rosa.

Since the 1604 supernova was preceded in 1602 by a comet in Cygnus (which looks like a cross), it should not surprise us that later commentators on the Rosicrucians saw the Rose Cross Brothers as related to these phenomena, announced by Providence in the heavens and at whose pregnant sign the order underwent a kind of inspirational rebirth with the discovery of their founder's body "whole and unconsumed" (fluids intact) in 1604.

It is an open question whether the authors of the earliest Rosicrucian writings took up these clues for themselves or whether the phenomena were delightfully or magically coincidental.

From the point of view of alchemy, the returning star liberates spirit from matter, causing new developments in consciousness, thought, and the world. These were consummations devoutly to be wished and devoutly resisted. Just how deep the resistance could get we may see from a clear look at what divided Kepler from his old friend Röslin and those who thought like him in the debate following the controversial nova of 1604.

RÖSLIN VERSUS KEPLER

Like Kepler, Helisaus Röslin came from the area around Stuttgart in Württemberg. The son of a pastor from Pleiningen, he early on developed contacts among the theologians of Tübingen (Röslin sent his son Nicolaus to Tübingen to study in 1591).

Around 1579 Röslin was studying astronomy and alchemy in Baden-Durlach. He then joined the practical alchemical work of Samuel Eisenmengern of Pforzheim. Eisenmengern, patronized by the Elector Prince of the Rhine, Georg Johan, was a Paracelsian doctor and follower of radical spiritual theologian and knight Caspar Schwenckfeld (1489–1561). Circles that combined Paracelsian medicine and alchemy with radical spiritual ideas are central to our story; they provided the networks through which the Rosicrcucian writings would spread.

Moving on to become medical doctor to the bishop of Strasbourg in 1578, Röslin corresponded with the astronomer and mathematician Michael Mästlin, who taught both Kepler and the principal author of the original

Rosicrucian writings, a remarkable man whom we shall encounter shortly.

Röslin was fascinated by the interplay of symbolic and biblical chronology with astronomy. His first major work on the subject, *Speculum et harmonia mundi* (The mirror and harmony of the world, 1579) was available only in manuscript, but it was pirated in a printed version made at Amersbach in 1605. That version also contained excerpts from one of Kepler's treatises on the new star of 1604. This was hardly Röslin's fault, but it doubtless annoyed Kepler, especially as the work was dedicated to his employer, Emperor Rudolf II. It looked like Kepler's work was endorsing that of Röslin. Kepler felt forced to denounce Röslin's prophecies in 1606, launching an intellectual tussle that went on for years over the interpretation of astronomical phenomena. The most significant arena of that tussle was Tübingen.

Kepler felt that Röslin's work was simply not in the same category as his own; Kepler distinguished "cosmological" writings from "chronological" writings, arguing that Röslin's predictions were not properly supported by astronomy, insofar as they were far too specific. How could astronomy really be supposed to back up interpretations for a climactic new age, involving the complete defeat of the Roman Church, of which his patron was supposed to be a loyal—if unusually tolerant—member?

Astronomy should not, Kepler believed, be used as an add-on to primary chronological speculations, no matter how accurate the astronomical knowledge of the prognosticator. The astronomy should come first; mathematical science could not necessarily certify the interpretation. We see here perhaps the birth pangs of a long and painful struggle that would eventually separate questions of scientific fact from judgments of value, or, as we say, "value judgments." Nevertheless, in retrospect we can see that that is the essence of the debate—a debate that seems old hat to us today but was unpleasantly indicative at the time of something peculiar happening in science. Was not the point of science to acquire wisdom and to help God's scheme of salvation?

Not really, implied Kepler. That would mean taking sides. Protestants and Catholics had different notions of what the scheme entailed, and who could play. Kepler could see how Röslin's calculations—a painstaking combination of precise astronomy and the Sabian "seven ages" theory to be found in Abu Ma'shar—were to be used by Protestant activists searching for heavenly

signs of a Protestant redeemer figure. This figure would soon come to revivify the last—or seventh—age. This, Kepler implies, is a *religious* debate, not a scientific one. But he could not quite say that, because that would upset the churches—both Catholic and Protestant—for, in their view, questions of science were not independent of religion; Kepler knew that well enough. It must have been very painful for men like him to have to bite their tongues.

There is no doubt that Röslin's predictions, inspired by the supernova of 1572, were not only of a religious nature, but of a politically volatile character. That is because Röslin was influenced by two unusual figures: a schoolmaster from Lüneburg named Paul Grebner and the brilliant—if eccentric—French millenarian Guillaume Postel.

Postel's *Panthenousia* (Everywhere and everything) was published in Paris in 1547, sixteen years before the French geometer and prophet met England's star genius John Dee in that city to discuss a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Cancer that Cyprian Leowitz in Prague believed portended wars in central Germany, as well as the revelation of secret arts and knowledge. Leowitz also predicted the return of the "Lion from the woods" who would make his terrific presence known in Bohemia. The common source, as ever, was the Sabian wisdom of Abu Ma'shar.

Postel argued for the imminence of a universal reformation led by the prophet Elijah, or Elias, whom Postel identified with himself. As Elia Pandocheus, Postel foresaw a union effected among Christians, Jews, and the Islamic sect of Ishmaelites, since all looked to the arrival of a messiah figure. Postel's ideas of the messiah were, however, beyond the thought of his day.

Formerly a lecturer in geometry at the Sorbonne (1539–44), then an enthusiastic member of the Jesuits, Postel was ejected from Ignatius Loyola's new order for his unconventional ideas. Characteristically, he thought there should be a new order of Jesuits, perhaps called Jesuives. The existing Jesuits, we should hardly be surprised, condemned his view that the new messiah would be female, and that the true redemption would occur through a couple, since God was androgynous or perfect.

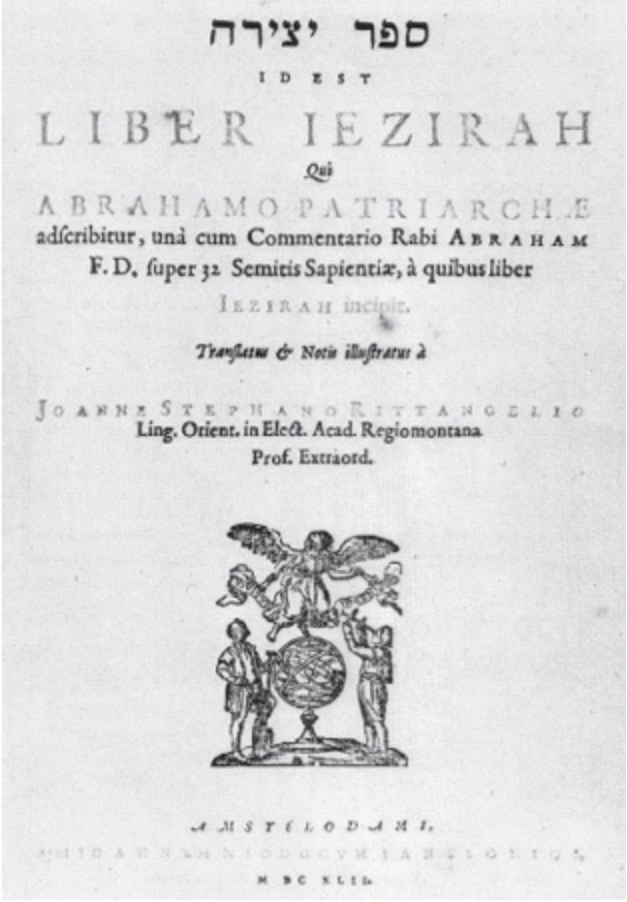
Postel found his messiah in the form of Johanna, a learned sister of the hospital attached to the Church of St. John and St. Paul in republican Venice: she was the "new Eve," and he declared himself her spiritual son. Spiritual redemption could come to anyone, he believed, who united with the female

Sophia, the feminine spirit in man, Wisdom, the Schekhina or glory of God, the indwelling of Lights.

On March 13, 1604, seven months before the appearance of the new star in Sagittarius, the Swedish mystic, court archivist, and critical reader of Postel (and, later, the Rosicrucian writings) Johannes Bureus (1568–1652) himself had a dream of the divine Sophia, the lady cloaked with stars. Bureus took it as a spiritual sign and imagined an impending great council of reformers.

Postel had many other inspiring ideas that contemporaries put down to madness. For example, he envisioned a new world order that would emerge with a reformed monarch and a wholly reformed pope sitting in the Holy Land. It was Postel who returned from the East with a translation of the primary classic of Hebrew Kabbalah, the *Liber Iezirah* (The Book of Creation), which explained the secret structure of God's universe in terms of divine emanations. This work would have a great impact on later Rosicrcucian conceptions.

How far Postel influenced later Rosicrucians in other respects cannot be known for certain, but it is worth mentioning that in his *Candelabri typici in Mosis Tabernaculo* (Emblematic candlesticks in the Tabernacle of Moses; Venice, 1548), he took ideas from the kabbalistic Zohar and came up with a prediction of an earthly kingdom and a new order of priests based on the biblical figure of Melchizedek (lord of righteousness; see Psalm 110:4, Heb. 7:1–4). The idea of a special order of Melchizedek would become a feature of eighteenth-century Rosicrucianism over two centuries later, while some 1,300 years earlier, Melchizedek had been a "revealer-figure" dear to Gnostics. There is a book bearing his name within the Coptic Gnostic Nag Hammadi Library, discovered in 1945.



The *Liber Iezirah* (The Book of Creation), a key work of Kabbalah attributed to Abraham the Patriarch, translated by Joannes Stephanus Rittangelius (1606–1652), Amsterdam, 1642.

Postel's new order of priests may have influenced the imaginative conception of the Fraternity R.C. One of the key figures associated with the first Rosicrucian writings at Tübingen, Christoph Besold, professor of law, was interested in Postel. Postel's *De nativitate mediatoris ultima* (on the ultimate birth of the mediator; basel, 1547) was in Besold's extensive library. Tübingen's brilliant professor and student of Christian mysticism also quoted from Postel's book on universal reformation, *De orbis concordia terra,* in his treatise "On the religious sects of the Saracens," published in Tübingen in 1619 (*Consideratio legis et sectae Saracenorum*). It is significant again that Besold shared Postel's interest in the more obscure spiritual societies in the Middle East, since it was from such a source that the Rosicrucian wisdom was thought to have been derived in the first place.

ARTIS
KABBALISTICÆ,
SIVE
SAPIENTIÆ DIVINÆ
ACADEMIA;
In nouem classes amicissima cùm breuitate, tum claritate digesta.
Per Petrum Morestellum Artium Liberalium Magistrum, Doctorem Theologum & Sancti Nicolai de la Taille Rectorem.
Ad Illustrissimum Potentissimumque Principem Carolum à Lotharingia, Ducem d'Elbeuf Parem Franciæ, &c.
PARISIIS,
Apud MELCHIOREM MONDIERE,
via Iacobæa propè S. Seuerinum.
M. D. C. XXI.
Cum Priuilegio Regis Christianiss.

Artis Kabbalisticae, Paris, 1621. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Arguably, the true mystic source of the creator of the Rosicrucian mythology's ideas was Christoph Besold's library in the duchy of Württemberg.

GREBNER AND STUDION

As well as taking seriously Postel's announcement of the imminent arrival of the seventh age, when the seventh candelabrum of the last times would be lit, Röslin also commented on the prophecies of Paul Grebner in a ten-page manuscript, now in the Herzog August Bibliotek, Wolfenbüttel, entitled "Bedencken und Censur über Pauli Grebneri Apparitiones oder göttliche Erscheinungen Sericum Mundi filum" (Consideration and censure of the apparitions of Paul Grebner or divine appearances—a thread of the Far Eastern world).

Grebner's visions began on the eve of June 23 (John the Baptist's day), 1573, at Lüneburg in north Germany. The visions seem to have been first inspired by the sight of the supernova of 1572. Grebner associated the new star with the image of a boiling pot about to explode. The woeful stir of the vision was whipped up by the appalling massacre of Huguenots (French Protestants) that had taken place in Paris in 1572 and that cried out for revenge and restitution. Grebner envisioned a German Lutheran invasion of France, followed by a council of the most learned men, who would meet and encourage "a silvery, golden, well celebrated and everlasting age."

Grebner also called out for a union of Protestant princes to counter Spanish atrocities against Protestants in the Netherlands. According to the visions, the conflict would end with the return of the Messiah and the election of Christian August, elector of Saxony, as emperor of Germany.

Grebner had to wait thirteen years before he was summoned to Hamburg in 1586 to meet Ségur-Pardaillon, diplomat of the Huguenot-tolerant House of Navarre, and, among others, British emissary Sir Thomas Bodley (founder of the Bodleian Library, Oxford). Were Grebner's prophecies coming true?

As a result of the encounter with Bodley, Grebner's work was translated into Latin and presented to Queen Elizabeth I. A copy surfaced sixty-five years later in London in which appeared the words "The Lyon having the Rose shall utterly destroy the Pope; so that after there shall be never any Popes." Curiously, this phrase does not appear in the Wolfenbüttel version of the prophecies, where, instead, there is a reference to a host of lions with the Protestant king of Denmark as the lion with an anchor.

This phrase about the Lion having the Rose is significant to our story, because it has long been held that the origins of the Rosicrucian fraternity might be sought in a militant evangelical league (Confederatio Militiae Evangelicae) called the *cruce signati* (the cross-signed), founded among north European Protestant nobility (particularly the queen of England, king of Denmark, and House of Navarre) in 1586 to protect the Reformation from Habsburg-Guise extermination.

The "Rose" in the quotation would seem to be the English Tudor Rose, while the "Lion" would seem to symbolize the united strength of Protestant monarchs (with more than a hint of apocalyptic prophecy). England was doing its best to help the Dutch militarily in the 1580s; Protestant leaders

hoped for more from England.

This combination of forces appeared in Simon Studion's *Naometria*, completed in 1604 and influenced by Röslin's astro-chronological work. *Naometria*, with its chronology for the rebuilding of the Temple, was the cause of bitter controversy in Tübingen. Studion himself was not far away. He had received his master's degree there in 1565, studying history with Martin Crusius (1526–1607), and had been working as a pastor at Marbach, outside Stuttgart. Furthermore, it was the combination of political forces in Studion's massive work, among other indices, that led British historian Dame Frances Yates to link the genesis of Rosicrucianism to British political and chivalric movements promoted by John Dee in central Europe during the 1580s and 1590s, movements (in Yates's view) leading ultimately to the marriage of the elector Frederick of the Palatine to James I's daughter Elizabeth in London in 1613.

However, Yates massively overplayed her hand; subsequent research has revealed a truer and in many respects more complex picture than that drawn in her influential 1972 book, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. There certainly was a faction in British political life urging a union of Protestant princes against Habsburg-Roman power, but while those activities might have encouraged the apocalyptists and astro-chronologists who later seized on the Rosicrucian writings for their own ends, British activities had nothing to do with the actual creation of the invisible Brothers of the Rose Cross. Indeed, as Susanna Åkerman has pointedly demonstrated, the supposed meeting of Protestant evangelical diplomats thought by Studion—and many others since—to have taken place at Lüneburg in 1586 to forge a militant Protestant union was, in fact, an interior vision of Grebner's. It was little removed from his earlier dream of a great council of the learned who would initiate a golden age. Indeed, in an illustration made by Grebner of his council at Lüneburg, now in Wolfenbüttel, the presence of Catholic participants at a table shows that Grebner's vision was that of a council of the learned, not a cabal of evangelical knights.

This circumstance demonstrates clearly the incredibly close intertwining of vision, prophecy, astro-chronology, politics, and religion in this period. Not only did Simon Studion get to hear by 1592 that such a meeting had actually, as opposed to imaginatively, taken place at Lüneburg, but a Venetian report

of it has recently been discovered by Ron Heisler in British state papers.[3] The dream had become a reality while remaining a dream.

Whatever did or did not actually take place, certainly there was some kind of diplomatic initiative pursued—if not at Lüneburg, then at Hamburg—in 1586. However, we can now be certain that this initiative did not involve the establishment of a Rose Cross Brotherhood, or of anything like it.

For that, we must now turn our attention to an extraordinary man who found inspiration in the prophecies of Simon Studion, a man described by a younger friend as the “jewel of Tübingen.” His name was Tobias Hess (1568–1614).

THREE

A PRINCE OF UTOPIA

Do not think yourself successful unless the masses laugh at you.

HEINRICH KHUNRATH, *AMPHITHEATRUM SAPIENTIAE AETERNAE SOLIUS VERAE*

A ghost hovers about the group from which emerged the invisible Brothers of the Rose Cross. We have no portrait of the man who, perhaps more than anyone else, inspired the principal creator of the invisible fraternity. By all accounts his was an intensely striking personality, and in his last years he was no less striking to the eye, being by then a kind of living mummy, such were his fleshly afflictions.

Tobias Hess was born on January 31, 1568, in Nürnberg, in which once beautiful city Tobias's father, Frederick, was a senator. Hess was raised according to an ideal of Christian goodness, taught by his parents to read, to pray, to be innocent, austere, and, in the best sense, simple—that is, to avoid pretentiousness and the traps of embracing rhetoric and social status over substance. Their temperate severity gave Hess a foundation to which he could look back when, in the course of time, he entered the world a free man, leaving what he called "the holy school" for the "profane" one.

Hess attended the universities of Erfurt, Jena, Altorf, and, finally, Tübingen, but would come to speak of them with a combination of abhorrence and Christian indignation: "In what innocence," he complained,

did I leave my parental home behind, how frugal, modest and eager to

> learn! and what a criminal I have become, how rude, and a real tippler. My friends were parasites, my private tutors, no-goods, who advocated the profligate life. Alas, there was no one to keep me back or look after me. The sacred and valuable books I had brought along were taken away and swapped for ruinous ones.
>
> Every now and then I became aware of myself and it required a painful physical and spiritual effort to get me out of my lethargy; sparks of my education still resisted. But the rapacious gang of seducers—like ushers—was at hand. Though I loathed wine as a matter of fact, I let my glass be filled again and again, under their pressure and against my will. I lost any sense of shame. Hardly anywhere did I hear a word of truth being spoken; in this boisterous flood of opinions I could no longer hear properly.[1]

Hess had money, but it only made things worse: “Gold! how thou hast betrayed me! Lo, my poor parents, how you warned me in vain! You, my good parents, how far you were away from me!”

While it is pleasing to know that there was at least one real human being behind the Invisibles, this lacerating, self-judging account does read somewhat like the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. Saints do tend to overstate the case of their depravity, being more sensitive to their defects—and the spiritual consequences—than most people. But how could a saint see the world for what it is without being able to see himself or herself likewise under the eye of the spiritual magnifying glass?

Hess was a man of vision; he saw *through* the eye, not *with* it.

In fact, Hess studied hard, but his love of music brought him into loose company; music can be an enrichment of life, or an escape from it. Later, he was of mixed opinion about music and as for public education considered the basic idea excellent, but in practice reckoned public educational institutions horrible spoilers of character. He was not a man to be swayed by the gilt-laden, title-heavy lords of university life who considered that their position automatically made them kings of every subject. Hess’s ideal college was made up of modest men who really knew something, the kind of men who seemed to Hess invisible in the showy World of the universities, governed by the grace and favor of overflattered princely patrons.

Hess mastered Greek, Latin, and Hebrew and the philosophies expressed in those languages. He embellished this knowledge with a love of history and poetry; his discourse was both elegant and erudite. Also, and unusually, Hess enjoyed an abiding love and study of mechanics, a subject in which he had few peers, calling as it did for a practical—and not merely theoretical—knowledge of physics and mathematics.

He was a gifted designer and inventor. He even attempted—perhaps as a learning exercise—to construct a perpetual-motion machine (a *perpetuum mobile*). While others spent their time on long dinners, Hess could be found in his study assembling ingenious wheels, producing turns and spirals of miraculous motions the likes of which his friends asserted had never been seen before. In the process, Hess attained "real memories of eternal matters from the treasure-chambers of his rich spirit." Here in Hess's mind was the inexhaustible treasure that the profane sought in the wrong places with threats and violence, cunning and subterfuge. Inevitably, Hess's wonderful interest invited the cheap jibes and vulgar insults that Noah had to endure when he made his ark—and always from those who could not understand so much as the workings of a common mill.

In spite of the cavils of the jealous and the coarseness of the stupid, Hess seemed to have it all, and those around him reckoned he had every reason to rest on his laurels and enjoy a prosperous existence. But Hess found no satisfaction for his mind or his soul in what he knew. He looked for a deeper knowledge that might bring true peace of mind. So while the (blind) world saw him as a master, he himself was only too aware of the imperfections of the knowledge of his time.

What seemed unassailable in knowledge he knew to be insecure—including, of course, his own reputation. What was thought to be known, he said, was often simply a cloak for deceit. You could not trust wholly in the books of the "masters" if it was secure truth you were seeking; you had to go to the source: practical experience. You had to get off your bottom and find things out for yourself, whether people liked you for it or not. If truth was far away and in a distant, inaccessible clime, then you had to follow your conscience and take the risk involved in real knowledge. Be it jungle or desert, there was a star to guide you.

Strange that to us Hess's image has become invisible—and yet how vivid!

Tübingen opened its doors to Hess as a lawyer, and might have hoped he had remained one, but Hess found there such deceits as to make the throne of justice incompatible with the scales of fairness, and truth incompatible with law. (He became a doctor of civil and canon law in 1592.)

Hess began to study medicine as a more effective and sympathetic way to help his fellow creature. He felt he had found his vocation and funded his own studies. He sought no authority to obey other than what might be good for the patient. So while he naturally took in the academically respectable works of Galen and Hippocrates, he also took in the controversial medical works of Paracelsus (1493 or 1494–1541), such as *Archidoxa medicinae* (The arch-doctrines of medicine; Basel, 1570). Some of Paracelsus's ideas were of a decidedly gnostic kind—though no less potent for all that in actually healing people.

Hess joked that the stomachs of the "purple clad" teachers were somewhat delicate—their works would often be read out by the doctor at a distance while the patient was acted on by a lowly assistant. Paracelsus, Hess observed, would not "throw up" so easily. He got his hands dirty in the bowels of man and engaged directly with the body, addressing not just symptoms but ultimate causes.

Paracelsus was suspicious of treatments that did not fully involve nature, hard work, patience, and experiment. He understood that a human being was a marvelous, divine construction about which we actually knew very little. One thing Paracelsus was sure of, however, was that humans find their being encompassed at all times by nature in its full extension, from the stars to the Earth, and that it was therefore reasonable to assume—and by proof of practice—that there was something of the stars in human beings themselves, made in the divine image.

The essence of life flowed largely unseen, but was frequently blocked. Paracelsus was therefore not surprised when a successful treatment might have very little, visibly speaking, to do with the disease. A great deal of modern visible cause-and-effect treatment eschews this insight. If things cannot be shown to be connected, then they should not work, even if they do!

The essence of Paracelsus's medical theories was the idea of freeing up energy flow, putting people back in touch with vital spiritual and cosmic energies of which the natural forms we see with our eyes are expressions—all

poppycock, of course, to the materialist. Paracelsus's famous tripartite division, his three principles, show the levels through which human beings should be addressed for treatment. Using the symbolic language of alchemy, Paracelsus's followers referred to mercury (spirit), sulfur (soul), and salt (matter).

In the truly sound wholeness of a spiritual body, spirit (the divine likeness) is wedded to soul (the sum of all faculties, including reason). This couple are then bound harmoniously to the carnal person, the person of matter, flesh, and blood. A fourth principle may be described as *lux*, light, or the *astrum* (star), the life-giving light that, unless obstructed, separates the pure from the impure, thus unveiling a general illumination derived from this light or inner sun.

Sixteenth-century alchemist Martin Ruland Sr. (1532–1602) identified this "star" with the imagination: the divine power of creation, the primary "organ" of true, as opposed to merely material, vision. Healthy, whole people have a glow; highly spiritual people may be positively electric! Paracelsus was, by all accounts, such a person. We shall see in due course how these conceptions shaped the very structure of the first writings of the invisible brotherhood.

Knowing their paper teachers' doctrines as well or better than they did themselves, Hess and Paracelsus consequently knew their teachers' limitations. This, the flesh-and-blood teachers were—and are—loath to admit. Livelihoods were at stake. Hess took no money from the afflicted. While to Hess, Galen and Paracelsus (though divided by many centuries) were friends engaged in a common struggle to bring light into the darkness, their supporters did not see things that way. The medical faculty at the university took exception to Hess's activities. Galenists (followers of Galen, ca. AD 129–201) to a man, they resented the intrusions of the *arriviste* Paracelsus, who in some quarters was regarded as worse than a heretic. Soon Hess was the victim of slander, some of it silly, some dangerous.

ALTERIVS NON SIT, QVI SVVS ESSE POTEST.
OMNE DONVM PERFECTVM A DEO, IMPERF. A DIABO.
LAVS DEO, FEX VIVIS, REQVIES ÆTERNA SEPVLTIS.
AVREOLVS PHILIPPVS THEOPHRASTVS.

Paracelsus (1493–1541), from Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Paracelsus, Nuremberg, Balthasar Caymox, 1606. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

It has been said that real virtue enjoys the displeasure of others. Initially suppressed, the virtue emerges with renewed vigor. So it was with Hess. His enemies should have left him alone. The greater the calumny, the stronger Hess became. It seems success in curing his first patients was for them a pill of disappointment that affected their health! However, the bilious attacks on Hess's medical practice made him publicly known as a healer—something he deeply regretted; he had hoped to practice in secrecy.

Hess resented public attention or acclamation. He did not think selfesteem came from absorbing the judgment or praise of others but from denying self—a rare lesson in our age of the easily offended and overpraised. In short, for Hess, self-estimation was certainly self-deception. Taking this stance in the world seems to have invited him to put all his faculties to the test, but as his colleague at Tübingen, Christoph Besold, believed, the noblest metal will be subject to the severest trial in its purification. Hess did not complain for himself.

On the other hand, as sometimes happens in the case of healers, many offers of honors and even huge salaries came his way from the courts of Germany. He chose not to rub shoulders with the rich and the upper classes. While resisting the invitations of the wealthy, his heart was open to the entreaties of anyone else. The wiser of the powerful grumbled a bit but discovered it was better to profit from Hess's abilities indirectly.

Despite the stupidity of the critics, Hess could still have advanced to the pinnacles of fame in medicine and physics. Again, he preferred a higher calling. He felt his attainments were as nothing without knowledge of God, in his creation, and through spiritual worship. The divine spirit cannot, he believed, be satisfied on Earth alone. Whatever science a man practices, he must not forget why he has been put on Earth. The hunger of the spirit calls to God, and the inner man cannot afford easy contentment in the enticements of this life alone. Hess saw his *Heimat*, his homeland, not in the *primum mobile* of Aristotle, but in the heavens of God.

Hess responded deeply to all the contrasting moods of the scriptures: its heavy burdens, its unblinking realism about the nature of men and women, and also its rare heights of spirit and sanctuaries of wisdom. But that the Bible was taught in the universities of Protestant Germany did not mean that those who studied it were respected or favored, especially if they became, as it were, too *involved* with it. In the reformed territories, one might be free to read the Bible, but one was not free to think and interpret the Bible—at least, not in a university. Not that Hess wanted to discuss what he saw within its pages; he would, it was said of him, rather pray than talk, practice faith rather than research it, and experience God rather than describe God. In short, Hess attempted to imitate Christ.

According to the diary of classics tutor Martin Crusius (November 1597–November 1601), Hess became enamored of futuristic biblical prophecy and of the efforts of Simon Studion to clarify the eschatological timetable. Hess expressed warm interest in the seven angelic ages theory developed by Jacob Brocardo from Abu Ma’shar. According to Crusius, Hess reckoned the downfall of the papacy was close in 1597. If it failed to occur, then much other prophecy would be found to be false. In 1598, Hess was loaning apocalyptic material to Simon Studion, including his copy of Brocardo’s commentary on the book of Genesis.

In 1601, on a cold and snowy Thursday evening in November, at a six-hour banquet hosted by Professor Matthias Enzlin, Crusius found Hess in a black, prophetic mood. Hess prognosticated “many great ills,” adding that “from the north all evil comes,” possibly a reference to the martial activities of the kings of Sweden and Denmark, perhaps a reference to the suppression of the Netherlands by Spain, or perhaps to all of that and more: the imminent

appearance of the “Lion of Septentrion.”

And then came the star of 1604.

INTERROGATION

Hess found himself in the thick of the controversy because he was acquainted with Simon Studion and his *Naometria;* they had corresponded over its contents, and Studion allowed Hess to copy his correspondence with Duke Frederick (which indicated the duke’s approval), as well as Studion’s *Judicium* on Brocardo’s theory of seven fiery trigons from Adam to 1584: the beginning of the end, according to the theory.

In documents discovered by Carlos Gilly at the Stuttgart Landesbibliotek, Studion explained to Hess that his work was intended to clear away clouds of obscurity from the Revelation of St. John the Divine, using the power of the Holy Spirit and mathematics.

> And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. (Rev. 11:1)

Studion had only done as he was told.

Hess also had his own ideas that could be tied into predictions of the imminent fall of the pope and the last judgment. Indeed, no one who had reverently read the second Book of Esdras (in the Old Testament Apocrypha), or the Book of Revelation, could fail to see there was canonical authority behind Studion and Hess’s point of view. Many who have been spiritually scorched by the sight of deep corruption in human society are likely to find their minds resonating with these works—for it is hope in God’s eventual justice and judgment that they offer. However, hope is one thing; precise chronologies are another—and interpretation is everything.

Studion’s assertion was that it was not just a question of interpretation, the mathematics confirmed it: the numbers added up. And they were holy numbers.

Reading the text above, for example, the pious could hardly be blamed for taking the injunction directly: “Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the

altar, and them that worship therein." (Which, incidentally, has an intriguingly Masonic ring to it—but that, of course, is another interpretation.)

Naometria was duly presented to Duke Frederick of Württemberg, who found it interesting. This tolerance was not shared by everyone at the court. Some voices condemned Studion behind his back—and those voices had contacts at Tübingen. Matthias Enzlin, a corrupt lawyer, was not only chancellor of the university but also a councilor to the duke.

Furthermore, there was politics in Studion's work. For anyone caring to peruse the manuscript's 1,800 pages, there could be found an appendix containing a six-part canon calling for the Lily (King Henry IV of France), King James of England, and the duke of Württemberg himself to gather under the banner of the Rose to fight victoriously for a new era. Since the prophecies supporting this struggle came in part from II Esdras 13, where we hear of a roaring lion coming out of the wood to destroy a three-headed eagle, it could hardly avoid notice that the eagle represented the Hapsburgs and the Lion the redeemer of the Protestant cause.

Naometria, the measurement of the Temple, was advocating inevitable war between Protestants and Catholics, suggesting Duke Frederick be a leader in such a war.

The Rose may have been a symbolic reference to the Rosa-like supernova of 1572, so familiar to Studion and Hess's astrochronological reading. The two kings (of France and Britain) and the duke (effective king of Württemberg) should follow the star to the birth of the new heaven and earth!

Hess himself could not deny that there was abundant textual support for Studion's view of the end of the world in the Bible and so could not deny the possibility that Studion might be correct in his general assumptions, however inconvenient it might be for those who set store by a firm anchorage in the continuity of this world.

Hess himself had made a deep study of sacred numbers, of Kabbalah and biblical numerology, and investigated whether they could reveal anything about connections between the biblical Babylon and what Luther had called the "Babylonish captivity" represented by the Church of Rome's domination of religion in much of Europe.

According to one remarkable student of the time, Hess was called on by

“some young adepts” to stand up and defend Studion’s ideas. Hess’s friends advised against it. Hess himself felt that too much was being attached to the sacred lessons that might be learned from studying the biblical references to the apocalypse. Rather, like Kepler, he did not wish to put his name to predictions of too specific a nature. What was possible and what was probable were very different, and the two conditions were probably (or possibly) far removed from what was certain.

That the Bible taught the end of the world *was* certain, but as for precisely when, only time would tell. As for a coming golden age announced by a star, it was not impossible; indeed, should there be an outbreak of ideal circumstances, it might even be likely. But could one imagine stricter conditions than “ideal circumstances”? What could possibly initiate such an unworldly possibility? Not wishful thinking, surely.

Maybe, something else . . . maybe something inspired . . . imaginative, perhaps unreal but *true*.

All musings aside, Hess now found himself caught out by those who had opposed him when he began his studies of medicine and chemistry. In fact, he was caught between spiritual ideals and political reality. In 1605, Hess was called before Tübingen’s theological faculty for interrogation on his apocalyptic beliefs. The theologians warned him to cease his dangerous speculations on fiery trigons. Such things should be left to officially sanctioned experts.

Hess was unrepentant. On July 2, 1605, he wrote an *apologia* to Duke Frederick maintaining that all prophecies would be fulfilled in time, that the star of 1604 was a divine sign, that God’s enemies would be destroyed, and that all should take heed of the prophet Habbakuk (2:3): “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

It is noteworthy that at the 1605 interrogation, there was as yet no talk of Hess being a “Prince of Utopia” leading a brotherhood of secret conspirators. That would come later. The interrogation was resumed in 1609—by which time new accusations were hurled at Tobias Hess. As one influenced by Hess would write some years later, “It is amazing to see that arithmetic (to call it a name) all on its own has been able to move basically good people away from any kind of Christian charity and from the duty to help an outstanding fellow-

citizen."[2]

There was a lot to learn from the controversy raging in Tübingen. One who learned the lessons, and in whose life Hess was to play a remarkably creative role, was a very bright young man, born in Herrenberg, near Tübingen, on August 18, 1586.

His name was Johann Valentin Andreae.

Without Andreae's recollections of his friend, we should have known practically nothing of Tobias Hess, who would, to history, have remained completely invisible.

ENTER THE GENIUS

Johann Valentin Andreae came from a family whose high status in the world of theology and ecclesiastical government had, like many others, undergone a decline as the Protestant sovereigns of German states took more authority for themselves and their chosen ministers. The appearance of what has been called "caesaro-papism" (the word speaks for itself) would in time have serious implications for the direction of Germany and the life of the people.

The old Catholic Church had first been nationalized (in Lutheran and Calvinist states) and then, to an extent, privatized. As a result, the religious life of the people depended greatly on the character of the prince, his advisers, and lesser nobility at any given time. Arguably, there was a positive outcome of this development. People who got into trouble in one German state got used to packing their bags and heading for another where the rule was more sympathetic. Consequently, ideas began to spread rather more quickly than had been the case in Catholic Christendom.

Not everyone, however, could move. The settled, and perennially unsettled, peasantry suffered a great deal. Andreae's family, with its old-time patrician instincts, was not blind to the effects on Christian life as the princes settled down to the new order after the evangelical excitements of the Reformation heyday. Their fathers or grandfathers might turn in their graves, but religious enthusiasm was now widely frowned upon; prophets acted as if they were above the law, and that would not do.

Andreae had a vested interest in the Lutheran Reformation, almost a legacy of concern. His grandfather Jakob, chancellor of the University of Tübingen,

was among the writers of the Lutheran Formula of Concord in 1577, and Lutheran theological politics would occupy Johann Valentin Andreae's mind for much of his extraordinary—and long—life. As Andreae's friend Christoph Besold observed of the religious situation: whereas before the Reformation the church was governed by the Pharisees, now it was run by the Scribes.

Christ "spoke with authority ["from the substance"], and not as the scribes," as the Gospel says. Andreae, conscious of the political, social, and religious power of the pen, would be a scribe with authority. His authority was his conception of Christ. His magical means was the power of his imagination, something stimulated doubtless by his family's interest in, and practice of, alchemy. Andreae's father carried out alchemical experiments with Tobias Hess.

Was not Christ on the side of the enthusiasts? Andreae suspected that he was.

Alchemical symbolism helped Johann Valentin find a deeper, more enriching Christian spirituality than the official church was offering in its prince-governed houses of God. Being saved by faith was not the same as being reborn in the spirit. Luther had written much on "justification by faith alone," but as Lutheran theologian Andreas Osiander (1498–1552) had written in a work that made a big impact in Tübingen, "Nothing is justified without being revivified."[3] The key doctrine of the Lutheran revolt was only a first step; its inadequacy was plain to see. Very plain.

Saying you were a Christian was not the same as being one. There was more to Christianity than met the eye. Without a revitalized imagination and the whole energies of a person united in spiritual rebirth, salvation was an empty word.

Tragically for young Johann Valentin, the kindly rule of his father fell away when the elder Johann Andreae died on August 9, 1601, a few days before his son's fifteenth birthday. The youth's mother, Maria (maiden name, Moser), moved the family to Tübingen. Maria Andreae, meanwhile, earned a living as an apothecary to the court of Württemberg. Johann Valentin was duly enrolled at the university, where the lonely, intense, but good-hearted boy distinguished himself as a brilliant student of classical languages, poetry, Renaissance literature, physics, mechanics, and chemistry.

In the year of the new star, 1604, Andreae suffered from a severe bout of tertian fever (a kind of malaria with fever paroxysms and hallucinations), an occurrence significant enough to warrant mention in a very brief chronology of his life that survives in manuscript at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel. Why Andreae mentioned this occurrence as the sole entry for 1604, we do not know.

The following year, 1605, thirty-seven-year-old Tobias Hess was battling it out with the theologians and doctors of the university, while Andreae found himself pulled between the giants of romantic and spiritual love, writing the plays *Esther* and *Hyancinth* and an extraordinary, still-popular work that has enjoyed an enormous influence. That work is the *Nuptia Chymica*, or *Chymische Hochzeit*, better known to English readers as *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz* or, sometimes, *The Alchemical Wedding*.

THE CHEMICAL WEDDING OF CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUZ

I should like in all humility to point to a curious synchronicity here, for it was when I was a theology student of nineteen years (the same age as Andreae when he wrote his *Chemical Wedding*) that I wrote my first play on a gnostic theme, putting it on at Balliol College, Oxford. It was called *Ipsissimus* and concerned, in its eccentric way, the attainment of the highest grade—according to the nineteenth-century Golden Dawn system—of Rosicrucian magic (I had read nothing of Andreae at the time).

Andreae's work was also concerned with reaching the heights of spiritual attainment and was infused with gnostic, Hermetic, and Christian mystical lore. Before we look at this beautiful, unique creation of Andreae's imagination (I could not claim these adjectives for my own rough play), I think it worth speculating briefly that it might have been something that occurred to young Andreae while suffering from tertian fever the year before; his being kept out of classes may have led to the sudden effusion of literary effort completed the following year.

Guillaume Postel (with whose work we know Andreae was at least later familiar) held the view that redemption came through an encounter with a feminine savior to whom one ought to be spiritually married. We may also

reflect on Paracelsus's idea of the spirit and soul needing willfully to wed in order to harmonize and spiritualize the body.

Then we may recall that during 1604, the Swedish Rosicrucian Johannes Bureus (tutor to the Swedish heir to the throne, Gustavus Adolphus) had a dream in which he encountered the divine Sophia, Lady Wisdom herself.

Naturally, we may now see the title *The Chemical Wedding* with new eyes, but that is only a beginning, for we find in the very first section of Andreae's fantasy the following:

> On an evening before Easter Day, I sat at a table, and having (as my custom was) in my humble prayer sufficiently conversed with my Creator, and considered many great mysteries (whereof the Father of Lights his Majesty had shown me not a few) and being now ready to prepare in my heart, together with my dear Paschal Lamb, a small, unleavened, undefiled cake [a Schwenckfeldian practice]; all of a sudden arose so horrible a tempest, that I imagined no other but that through its mighty force, the hill on which my little house was founded would fly into pieces.
>
> But inasmuch as this, and the like from the Devil (who had done me many a spite) was no new thing to me, I took courage, and persisted in my meditation, till somebody in an unusual manner touched me on the back; whereupon I was so hugely terrified, that I dared hardly look about me; yet I showed myself as cheerful as (in such occurrences) human frailty would permit. Now the same thing still twitching me several times by the coat, I looked back, and behold it was a fair and glorious lady, whose garments were all sky-coloured, and curiously (like Heaven) bespangled with golden stars; in her right hand she bore a trumpet of beaten gold, on which a Name was engraved which I could well read but am as yet forbidden to reveal it. In her left hand she had a great bundle of letters of all languages, which she (as I afterwards understood) was to carry to all countries. She also had large and beautiful wings, full of eyes throughout, with which she could mount aloft, and fly swifter than any eagle.
>
> I might perhaps have been able to take further notice of her, but because she stayed so little time with me, and terror and amazement still

possessed me, I had to be content. For as soon as I turned about, she turned her letters over and over, and at length drew out a small one, which with great reverence she laid down upon the table, and without giving one word, departed from me. But in her mounting upward, she gave so mighty a blast on her gallant trumpet, that the whole hill echoed from it, and for a full quarter of an hour after, I could hardly hear my own words.

In so unlooked for an adventure I was at a loss, how either to advise or to assist my poor self, and therefore fell upon my knees and besought my Creator to permit nothing contrary to my eternal happiness to befall me. Whereupon with fear and trembling, I went to the letter, which was now so heavy, that had it been mere gold it could hardly have been so weighty. Now as I was diligently viewing it, I found a little seal, on which a curious cross with this inscription, IN HOC SIGNO VINCES, was engraved.

Now as soon as I espied this sign I was the more comforted, as not being ignorant that such a seal was little acceptable, and much less useful, to the Devil. Whereupon I tenderly opened the letter, and within it, in an azure field, in golden letters, found the following verses written.

This day, today
Is the Royal Wedding day.
For this thou wast born
And chosen of God for joy
Thou mayest go to the mountain
Whereon three temples stand,
And see there this affair.
Keep watch
Inspect thyself
And shouldst thou not bathe thoroughly
The Wedding may work thy bane.
Bane comes to him who faileth here
Let him beware who is too light.

Below was written: Sponsus and Sponsa.

Sponsus and *Sponsa* are the bridegroom and bride, respectively. The wedding that Christian Rosycross has been invited to is that of the spirit and the soul. Andreae had been reading—and absorbing—some very unusual literature for a young man of his time. Perhaps he had also read a rare work by a fifteenth-century Englishman, Thomas Warden, who lived in Majorca and wrote a book on the angels that appear in dreams, a book that influenced the notorious Abbot Trithemius (1462–1515), who wrote on fiery trigons, angel magic, and cryptography, and the no less remarkable Valentin Weigel (1533–1588), who wrote a commentary on the dream-angel book and was a radical, theosophical spiritual author well known to Andreae.

Heut / Heut / Heut /
Jſt deß Königs Hochzeit/
Biſtu hierzu gebohren/
Von Gott zu Frewd erkohren/
Magſt auff den Berge gehen /
Darauff drey Tempel ſtehen/
Daſelbſt die Geſchicht beſehen.
Halt Wacht /
Dich ſelbſt betracht/
Wirſt dich nit fleiſſig baden /
Die Hochzeit kan dir ſchaden.
Schad hat wer hie verzeücht/
Hüet ſich wer iſt zu Leicht/
Vnden an ſtund : Sponſus & Sponſa.

The wedding invitation to Christian Rosenkreuz; note John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* symbol to the right; Chymische Hochzeit: Christiani Rosencreütz Anno 1459. Strasbourg, Lazarus Zetzner, 1616. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

In 1499, Trithemius wrote a letter to a Carmelite friend, Arnold Bostius, to whom he announced his discovery of *steganography*—apparently a method of invoking angels for the purpose of carrying secret messages. He attributed the art's invention to instruction received through divine revelation. One cannot help noting that on the invitation received by Christian Rosycross, there was the sign invented by John Dee, the Hieroglyphic Monad, whose reception and full meaning was a revelatory secret that expressed the union of matter and spirit in the cosmos. By this sign, Christian is informed, he would conquer. It is also worth teasing the reader with the thought that the year

before his *Monas hieroglyphica* was published (Antwerp, 1564), John Dee wrote to British Chief Minister William Cecil, saying that he had obtained the *Steganographia* as a service to the nation.

One may ask oneself, did a poorly and quite possibly overworked Andreae receive a dream visit from the divine Sophia, his angel of wisdom, in response to the romantic and lustful confusions natural to a young man of his age?

He would hardly be the last poet to envision such an occasion. Poet and musician Jimi Hendrix would write a song at the end of the 1960s describing a female angel with vast silver wings who came down to rescue him, telling him a story about the "sweet love between the moon and the deep blue sea." The song came to its composer not long after John Lennon and Yoko Ono appeared in a bag (appearing invisibly, so to speak) at a famous concert at the Albert Hall, London. The concert was called "The Alchemical Wedding." Something, as the popular song went, was in the air.

Harmonizing the flesh and the spirit is a deep concern for a young, romantic man, fearful of lust and spiritually idealistic. There were no sex therapists to draw on. The alchemical enterprise is peculiar in conception precisely because there is a fusion of material and spiritual categories. A high point of the alchemical operation is the *mysterium coniunctionis*, the divine copulation of Sol, the sun, and Luna, the moon, generating the "perfect union" of the hermaphroditic Rebis. Spiritual union may be expressed in sexual terms—may not the reverse, ideally, be likewise?

There is hope, for the romantic lover, in alchemy, and guidance too.

Either way, in the *Chemical Wedding*, it is the lady spangled with stars, whose wings are all-seeing, who initiates the process that will lift young Christian Rosenkreuz from out of the hell of his dream-hole.

Might not he, the humble, guileless youth, in his turn, do the same favor for a Europe floundering in the mud? Perhaps such an idea did not come from Andreae alone, but as a suggestion from a man who would invite him into the close community of his love and friendship three years later. Having said that, it may have been the case that, having already cured Johann's younger brother, Johann Ludwig, of an edematous knee—and medically treated Andreae's other siblings by 1606—it may have been Hess himself who assisted Andreae in his fever in 1604.

THE WHIRLPOOL

In 1606, Andreae hit a period he later described as “a sombre tempest,” but whether this ensued before or after his next adventure is unclear. Andreae’s confrontation with the world of Matthias Enzlin ended, he wrote, in tears.

For a season, young Andreae became a bit of a hothead and, wanting to put the world to rights, focused on the figure of Herr Professor Enzlin. The ensuing lampoon also targeted the moral character of Frau Enzlin. A lewd poem was apparently nailed to the family’s front door. Andreae might have thought he was doing the right thing, but in the eyes of authority he could only appear as a kind of punk determined to rock the boat. That Andreae’s parentage was so distinguished only made matters worse when a judicial inquest found that Andreae was the principal culprit who had tried to bring shame on the prince of Württemberg’s trusted minister.

You could say that Andreae was in the doghouse. He was provisionally rejected from application to ecclesiastical office and, for the time being, exiled from his studies at the university. Now Andreae and Hess really did have something in common—confrontation with university authority—but the connection would not be sealed for a couple of years yet. In the meantime, Andreae became a peregrine, taking advantage of the enforced break to see something of the world.

In 1607, he visited Heidelberg, with its amazing castle and monumental gardens above the River Neckar. At Heidelberg, Andreae, a voracious reader, became friendly with the noted book collector Jan Gruter (1560–1627). Gruter was a Palatinate librarian (at the elector Frederick’s library) from 1602 until the capture of Heidelberg by a Catholic army in 1622. Andreae used the Heidelberg library between 1607 and 1608 and continued to correspond with Gruter, helping him with his editorial work in 1621.

Andreae was always careful to nourish his inspiring circle of friends; fraternal ideals over great distances meant much to him. Each friendship had a distinct service in Andreae’s inner life, and not all his friends knew about the others. Andreae enjoyed what he called “secret friendships”—with people whose religious ideas, for example, might shock or annoy other friends. Andreae, being a genius, had complex and ambivalent drives. He could see

the good in an idea without accepting the whole package; he could see compatibility and harmony where others saw only a superficial conflict. Andreae drank deep.

After Heidelberg, Andreae visited Frankfurt (possibly for the book fair), Strasbourg, Mainz, Worms, and the Rhineland about Spires. Over the next three years, he toured Paris, Geneva, the Alps, Spain, and Italy. Now he could write from outer as well as inner experience—and he learned to pass it on. He became a pedagogue, earning his keep by teaching the sons of noblemen, caring for their minds as he opened his own.

Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654); note the family crest of St. Andrew's cross and four roses. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

One of the works he drafted in this period (not published until 1616) was a play particularly admired by the French scholar of Rosicrucianism Roland Edighoffer. Edighoffer has made a sensitive study of Andreae's remarkable, idiosyncratic literary creations in his book *Le Rose-Croix et société idéale selon J. V. Andreae*.

A large number of Andreae's instructive fictions use the image of a wanderer, a kind of outsider-seeker, a stranger or alien in the world. The figure is always part wanderer, part monk, part knight, but, it has to be said, for an adventurer somewhat passive, even wounded. Andreae's hero is led; he suffers; things happen to him. He is saved by Providence, dreams, angelic care. He is made, unmade, and remade.

Andreae is, of course, talking about himself as well as his profound

identification with the experience of Hess, but the theme is universal. The journeying hero, passing through the world, is a human soul grappling with the powerful mystery of the spirit in the world. The soul is in the alchemical vase of life, and a higher alchemist is working on him. The gold—his highest potential—will cost him all that he has, and then he will know that the gold of the world is as nothing.

Turbo (Whirlpool) launches the idea that will become the much traveled Peregrinus, though this ubiquitous alter ego of Andreae is not far removed from the Christian Rosycross of *The Chemical Wedding*, who sets off on a mysterious adventure wearing roses in his hat and a rosy ribbon across his chest. (The two books were published in the same year.)

In *Turbo*, the hero goes to France to study. He has a love affair, but the affair proves disappointing. He puts all his hope into alchemy, but that is only a beginning, for the world of alchemy is full of charlatans and losers. Andreae had a keen eye for charlatans and was no mug for a likely story and spiritual promises. He had no intention of being a loser, either. The true Christian had to *win* the race.

In act 4, scene 4, of Turbo, *Naometria* is mentioned (the subject had obviously made an impact on Andreae). Having considered it, he lampoons those who follow the work. Even the fool Harlequin thinks he has become a prophet as a result of reading *Naometria*! In *Turbo*, Harlequin departs, offended. By contrast, Johann Valentin Andreae returned to Tübingen a wiser man. Now, perhaps, he could see the *real* Tobias Hess. It seems that he did. Indeed, the two became such good friends that after the death of this "Christian Hercules" (as Andreae described him) at the premature age of forty-six in 1614, Andreae would write passionately that while happy that Hess's sleep was now, at last, untroubled:

> Still I am sad, Hess, about you, because I loved you beyond anything. I loved you better than my own wife. How can I repay you, brother? How do I set right? Should I praise you? No, you are beyond praise. Should I apologise? No, you are beyond offence. Should I describe you for posterity? No, for you are already immortal.
>
> Whatever I can do, my modest fame consists in having known you as a friend. Indeed, I almost burst with pride for having been friends—and

> saying so—with such a learned man, such an invincible, honest and pious man. Therefore I can better be silent—as is common practice with all sacred ceremonies—and in silence I testify of my perplexity; stammering I confess that your essence is infinite.[4]

The core of Hess's being was infinite. This was no ordinary friendship, and it would tolerate no ordinary consequences.

A GANG OF CONSPIRATORS

Within a year of Andreae's temporary return to Tübingen in 1608, Hess would be interrogated again by the university authorities:

> Hess was said to be superstitious, a man who followed his own lines, an eccentric, a fantasist and—as a result of the multiplication of lies—a king of Utopia, an interpreter of dreams and a predictor.
>
> Whoever belonged to his closer friends and he called his brother, was said to be a member of a gang of fanatics, of a group of secret conspirators and a gathering of obscurantists.
>
> At one time they thought it appropriate to attack him with threats, and then again the silliest arguments were used. The one who managed to generate the most insane lies was considered to have hit Hess to the best of their abilities.[5]

It should be noted that Andreae insists that all these attacks were lies. Hess was not the leader of a circle of secret plotters. This point needs to be grasped, because the invisible Brotherhood of the Rose Cross has been seen as having emerged from such a circle—that the whole thing derived from a kind of revolutionary committee in the early communist mold, the few genuine writings of the brotherhood that emerged from Tübingen being quickly described as "manifestos," or programs for revolutionary, reformatory action on a global scale.

We know this to be the case because in 1626, a man called Philip Ziegler was arrested in London, having come from Germany to foment a social revolution, declaring himself "King of the Rosicrucians." His secret papers,

seized and examined by British security services, demonstrated that Ziegler regarded the manifestos as a call to organized covert action.

We know that there was indeed a circle around Tobias Hess because Tübingen's professor of oratory, Caspar Bucher, wrote an attack on a satirical work called *Menippus*, published anonymously in 1617. *Menippus* attacked the vanity and stupidity of Germany's university system and the smug conceit of the Lutheran establishment (among many other things). The author was Johann Valentin Andreae.

Bucher called *Menippus* an "alchemical abortion" and declared he knew where the book had come from. It issued, thundered Bucher, from "the circle that used to gather about Tobias Hess." Hess had been dead for three years, but the memory of his impact lasted as much among his enemies as his friends. Those friends included the priest emeritus Johann Vischer, Abraham Hölzl, Thomas Lanz, Johann Stoffel, Wilhelm Bidenbach, Samuel Hafenreffer, the medical student Anton Frey, Wilhelm Schickard, alchemist Christoph Welling, and Andreae's younger brother, Johann Ludwig Andreae. But again, one should not, I think, attach too much to the idea of a circle around Tobias Hess. They were not the secret fraternity of the Rose Cross! But they did constitute Andreae's intimate societas for some two years.

The fact is, Bucher was an enemy of Hess—and of *Menippus*; he had it banned in Tübingen. Andreae's response to the insane lies circulated about his old friend, in his memorial to Hess (written only a year after *Menippus*), is fascinating. It reveals as much of Andreae's ambivalent spirit as it does his profound understanding of human reality.

While denying the fantastic lies and insinuations made against Hess and his friends (it is unclear whether Andreae included himself in the condemned circle), Andreae nonetheless cries out to God's honest judgment that, if it is indeed the case that the power of corrupt and vile tongues is so strong in the world that even basically reasonable people are blinded to the sight of a figure of real virtue, and are so rendered unable to see things as they really are with their own God-given eyes, then, if the only way of avoiding such blindness is to become superstitious in an age of easy living, so be it!

> Oh that we all be superstitious in this age of Epicure! Let all of us follow the directives of Christ in these so profligate times! Let us be eccentrics

in virtue among such a large refuse dump of rabble! Let us be fantasists on a high level [note!] in times of materialism! Let us love as he did and let us call each other “brothers” [invisible brothers?] after having abandoned the embellishments of titles and pride of honours (what are you laughing at, Momus?), let us join in swearing servitude to Christ, negligence of this world, on mutual devotion and on a kind mutual communication; let us enroll ourselves as citizens of the realm, not Utopia, but that which is Christ’s—even if the age of our world makes it hardly visible anywhere; let us threaten this Godless world with disasters and let us—though not with all our hearts—predict the downfall of our homeland! Thus we have lived and, though you may die of your anger, Momus, God testifies for us that our lives have been lived in all simplicity, innocence and full of good intentions. I should like to live like that and win Him as my friend, for then the gold of this world would be worthless to me.[6]

44
TOBIÆ HESSI,
Viri incomparabilis,
IMMORTA-
LITAS.
M DC XIX.

J. V. Andreae’s tribute to Tobias Hess: *Tobiae Hessi, Viri incomparabilis, immortalitas*, Strasbourg, Lazarus Zetzner, 1619. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

What the world sees as useless is gold to the eyes of the spiritually reborn; what the world judges as gold is but a dead, lead weight to Andreae’s Knight of the Golden Stone (Christian’s new title in *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz*). The Philosopher’s Stone was everywhere found, but

nowhere seen. The imitator of Christ is a fool to the world. According to the Gospels, the Man of God was accused of being possessed by devils, of being a political conspirator, a superstitious visionary, and a public nuisance; he was crucified before the people, with their democratic consent. It was the so-called enemy of the people who saw the heavens in a common mustard seed and the gold of God in the lilies of the field. Better, Andreae implies, to be a brother of the rosy cross than surrender to the folly and blindness of the world, to whom the sight and nature of the true circle will always be invisible.

If the reader cannot grasp what Andreae is saying here, he or she will never grasp the plain and hidden meaning of the *Fama Fraternitatis,* the first so-called Rosicrucian Manifesto—the tract that set loose the Invisibles on a world haunted by its own ghosts.

FOUR

THE ALCHEMICAL WEDDING OF JOHANN VALENTIN ANDREAE

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

JOHN 1:9–11

It would appear that some time in, or shortly after, the year 1608, Tobias Hess and Johann Valentin Andreae discussed a question of a similar nature to that put by Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes, a question familiar to anyone who had read the story of *Don Quixote*, first published a few years earlier (1605) to pan-European success and acclaim. The question was this: How to make better a world where evil brings profit and virtue none at all?

In *Don Quixote*, as all lovers of literature know, the chivalric, romancesoaked Alonso Qihana takes the dusty road of fantasy. In a world where chivalry is dead, the old gent dons the rusting garb of a knight errant. His unquenchable need for virtue sends him mad. Soon he is fighting giants invisible to the world, terrors and lofty prizes that only he, in his folly, can see.

Cervantes was trying to express, through a comedy, a harsh observation and cutting idea. The Middle Ages was dead. There was no holy grail, no quest, no worthy crusade. Chivalry was a sick joke. If people in the modern

world actually did the things they cherished in their private thoughts and reading, the world's corruption would certainly ensure they would appear mad. Our modern art and literature took a long time to catch up with the first part of Cervantes's observation, an observation not based on suburban cynicism but on bitter experience as a soldier and slave of the Turks.

In the meantime, Europe responded deeply to something else in Cervantes's antihero's hero, something even its author may not have recognized at first. Quixote's comedic exploits not only provided fabulous meat for laughter, but something in him, something of his vision of life, was glimpsed, unconsciously, as being superior to the common light. There was a glow about Quixote, a glamor that made his rusting breastplate and knackered old nag look positively noble. The leaden *clip-clop* of Rocinante's hooves was, somehow, golden.

In a way, Quixote was the greatest knight of them all—for, banished from an imaginary world of the past in which he made sense, he now sallied forth and assailed the world itself, as it actually *was*. A secret lust lurks in the hearts of men and women: to see the world transformed, their whoredom and lowness made great, lifted beyond the filth of the world.

Beyond the filth: Faith, with her twin riders, Hope and Love. It may have seemed, to the combined minds of Hess and Andreae, insufficient to scare people into a change of vision by positing the apocalypse. The new age would better perhaps be born in the heart. If Christ's true, loving fraternity had indeed become a thing invisible, unfound, unseen, unloved, and unwanted in the world, why then, why not establish a *real* invisible fraternity? Reality and fiction would be blurred as the material world was penetrated by—and divided by—the spiritual. Such a marvelous paradox is surely at the root of the amazingly brilliant creation of the secret Brotherhood of the Rose Cross. Its mystery and fascination would never end, for it takes root in the unconscious realm from which it came.

The brotherhood's very invisibility would make it come alive in the imagination; its unreality might make it real. Here was a project! Here was a sketch for a true *perpetuum mobile*! Could they come up with the kind of dream that would appear as a premonition of the inevitable? How would one achieve such a thing? How could Andreae make the angelic lady who wakes up the young Christian blow her golden trumpet of fame into the ears of

others?

Such a project would have to be something incredibly attractive to the minds of its audience. It would have to fulfill their dreams, yet still lead them on through means of mystery. It would have to involve them, call them, speak to them directly. It would have to invade their dreams, communicate without spoken words or physical presence. It would have to ignite the signs of the times and bring a secret message into the imagination of the continent.

It would have to be mad and perfect, perfectly mad and madly perfect: a game as playful as it was serious. Secret signs and seals, hidden treasure—*that* is what fascinated their age; but the apocalyptic version of the golden age promise was, as Andreae could well observe, disturbing, merely setting off more violence, hurting the good and depressing the hopeful. Spiritual or material terrorism was not the answer, no matter how heavily shored up by scriptural writ.

Could global disaster be averted by a great change of heart?

How could all the elements of the times be subsumed—and transformed—into something imaginary yet powerful and irresistible?—something that could be carefully targeted; something that would bring together talented people from different backgrounds—and yet touch each of them individually? Who could make such an invitation?

Who could bring them into common purpose, bring them into the open to answer the call of the age—a call for love and brotherhood?

If there was even the slightest chance of success, then surely such an enterprise was worth a try, at least. Better, after all, to be a Christian fool than another spouter of hate; better to believe in the impossible than do nothing at all. And was it not the case, Hess might have suggested, that the young Andreae already had something to work on: a *story*, the story of a young man set on the road of transformation by the trumpet call of Fame, a visitation of divine Wisdom herself?

Surely, Tobias Hess, familiar with the thought of Guillaume Postel, knew the power of such a figure. Change had come to Europe through the activities of the wanderers, the free spirits prepared to be moved by the call of the spirit, to go beneath the skirts of Wisdom herself—those, in short, prepared to seek and to find.

Then the stroke of genius: in responding to the story, you would have to find the fraternity *for yourself*, and *in* yourself—for did not St. Paul say that his real life was "hid with Christ in God"?—a thought echoed in Luther's *Ecclesia in hac vita occulta*—the church concealed in this life.

WHO WAS BEHIND THE *FAMA FRATERNITATIS?*

Sometime between 1608 and 1610 was conceived a story, "Fame of the Fraternity," a wonderfully ironic title for sure. The fraternity was not famous at all; it had, apparently, been completely invisible for over 120 years. The world was not interested. The tract's author or authors were also invisible; a good beginning: let the unknown issue from the unknown.

It began with a mystery, and scholars have been arguing about who wrote it—and whether there actually *was* a fraternity of the Rose Cross—for some four hundred years. A wag might pose them the question: Could they not see it was invisible?

Complications in the search for authors arose for many reasons, even apart from the simple fact that nobody ever owned up to the *Fama's* authorship. It was, after all, the work of an imaginary brotherhood. The *fratres R.C.* said they had written it, and you could hardly expect imaginary authors to reply to real letters, could you? That would only happen in an imaginary world, and the writings of the brotherhood had entered *this* one. The proper response, surely, was for the recipients to enter the world (or consciousness) of the brotherhood. As U.S. poet Jim Morrison would write in the late 1960s: "Enter the hot dream; come with us" ("An American Prayer," The Doors, 1975).

Another problem has been the persistence of the idea of the "circle" around Tobias Hess, with all the implications implicit in that phrase. Consequently, a number of scholars have gathered together a list of names of people known to Tobias Hess and Johann Valentin Andreae either in Tübingen or occasionally visiting them there, and have come up with something not far removed from the calumny launched against Hess in the first decade of the seventeenth century.

Thus, we have a band made up chiefly of the following: Andreae himself, Tobias Hess, Abraham Hölzl, Christoph Besold, Tobias Adami, Wilhelm von

der Wense, Anton Frey, Wilhelm Bidenbach, Christoph Welling, Wilhelm Schickard, Samuel Hafenreffer, Thomas Lanz, and Johannes Stoffel.

Now, there is very little hard evidence to link all these people up into some kind of unified body of any kind. Hess, Hölzl, Adami, Besold, von der Wense, and Lanz had all been friendly one with another or with Hess and Andreae during the period. Besold, who acquired the chair of jurisprudence at Tübingen in 1610, was a close friend of Andreae after Andreae had become intimate with Hess. Besold let Andreae use his amazing library (which would become the foundation of Salzburg University Library, containing the books of Andreae and Hess, and several copies of the *Fama Fraternitatis*).

Besold and Andreae shared a love for Christian mysticism, Hermetic and alchemical symbolism, and a concern for the Christian Church and society, as well as an informed fascination with astronomical and technical knowledge from Arabic sources.

They were all clever and learned men.

Adami and von der Wense were also good friends of Andreae and Besold, with a shared interest in Italian politics—especially the fate of the Venetian Republic (threatened by Hapsburg powers), and of the revolutionary friar and Hermetist Tommaso Campanella, imprisoned by the Inquisition. They made the most exciting politically tuned new Italian literature available to their friends in Tübingen.

Wilhelm Bidenbach translated Traiano Boccalini's satirical *General Reformation of the Whole Wide World* (published in Kassel in 1614). Von der Wense, a nobleman from Lüneburg in the north, also shared Andreae's great interest in new technology and architecture. Hafenreffer was a Tübingen medical student sympathetic to Hess; he read the oration at Hess's funeral. Wilhelm Schickard was a theologian and authority on Oriental studies at Tübingen and was therefore a friendly source of information to both Besold and Andreae. There is no evidence that any of these people opposed the original Rosicrucian writings.

What seems to have happened is that researchers have been unable to resist trying to find an *actual* Fraternity R.C. If you cannot find the fraternity, at least locate its real mirror in its creators. In other words, the creators must also constitute some kind of group or fraternity, if only of concerted, shared interests. But anyone who has studied coolly the material currently available

to scholarship soon realizes—perhaps to his annoyance—that the evidence for this does not really add up. It has to be forced to add up. The evidence is circumstantial. In spite of disconcerting facts, scholars have nonetheless been tempted by the idea of a "Hess circle," which, enemy calumny aside, is a neutral idea, and have proceeded thence to the fantasy.

Here are two examples of data used in support of "group authorship" of the so-called manifestos.

Melchior Breler, from Fulda in Buchau, physician to Duke August of Wolfenbüttel, wrote in his book *Mysterium iniquitatis pseudoevangelicae* (The mystery of the hateful, false evangelist; 1621) of "three eminent men" behind the *Fama Fraternitatis*. The purpose of their writing was apparently to discover the Philosopher's Stone as a means to healing the ills of the time.

From references to Andreae's work *Theca gladii spiritus* (Spirit of the sheathed sword; 1616), which claimed to include the religious thoughts of Tobias Hess (but was written by Andreae), and its reference to "*amicus noster Dominus Besold*" (our friend Master Besold), Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714) in his *Impartial History of the Churches and Heresies* (Frankfurt, 1700) concluded that Breler's three eminent authors were Andreae, Hess, and Besold.

It is interesting that Breler was a devotee of the spiritual Christian works of Johann Arndt, since according to Will-Erich Peuckert, it was Johann Arndt himself who told Christoph Hirsch (alias Joseph Stellatus, a pro-Rosicrucian writer) that *thirty* people were involved in the creation of the *Fama*.[1] Since Arndt was Breler's friend, why did he not tell Breler this?

In fact, Peuckert's assertion concerning Arndt also comes from Gottfried Arnold's massive work on heresies and churches, in which the author reproduced the contents of a letter allegedly written by Arndt to Hirsch. We cannot prove whether it was genuine. In the letter, Arndt told Hirsch that he had received the sub rosa admission from Andreae that he, together with some thirty others, had, in Württemberg, first broadcast the *Fama Fraternitatis* to learn Europe's judgments on it and to make true lovers of wisdom emerge from obscurity.

Well, there may be something in all this as regards the *purpose* of the *Fama*, but the two figures—three and thirty—are widely divergent. This is

perhaps all the more surprising since Johann Arndt was a figure held in the greatest esteem by Andreae. Arndt influenced Andreae deeply, imparting to him much of the insight that later developed into the Lutheran Pietist movement.

The Pietists stressed inward and spiritual imitation of Christ through an awakened, reborn spirit. This movement crossed denominational boundaries and was greatly influential in eighteenth-century Germany, whence it crossed to Britain and America. Andreae made a great contribution to its literature, building on a work that strongly appealed to both Andreae and Besold: Arndt's *Four Books of True Christianity*, published between 1605 and 1610. (The four "books" were Christ, the Bible, the Conscience, and "the Grand Universal Book of Nature.")

In Arndt, important aspects of orthodoxy met important spiritual aspects of Paracelsianism. Such a combination informs the *Fama* and suggests two distinct, but mutual, ways of thinking—in fact, two minds.

Arndt was not party to discussions at Tübingen in the critical period when the *Fama* was produced. However, after Arndt became superintendent general for Lüneburg, Andreae became a correspondent of Arndt (in 1614). Perhaps Andreae told him the "true story." But if Arndt did relate to Hirsch what Andreae had, allegedly, confided in him, why did not Hirsch (who himself wrote a treatise in favor of the brotherhood) tell the world? The world wanted to know.

Furthermore, the figure of thirty people behind the *Fama* does seem somewhat excessive! How many people does it take to write a tract? Surely, if that many people had been involved, the facts would have come out at some time, human nature being what it is.

There is a consistent style in the *Fama* that shows the compositional brilliance of a single, subtle mind: a synthesizing, harmonizing, erudite mind. The *Fama* does not read like the product of a committee. (The *Confessio Fraternitatis*—Confession of the brotherhood—on the other hand, in spite of memorable phrases and intriguing obscurities, does not have the crystalline, imaginative quality of the *Fama*.)

The thoughts contained in the *Fama* may, of course, be the product of close discussion with one or more persons, but the real question is, In its genesis, who was behind the project itself? Who knew about it; who shared

its primary intentions?

Before I deliver my conclusion on that question, there may be more to the "thirty" figure than meets the eye. Johann Arndt's patron at Lüneburg was August, duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1579–1666), who would also, after 1630, become Andreae's patron (they would write over six hunded letters to each other). It is significant that Andreae did not find his patron in the person of the prince of his home state, Württemberg.

The Duchy of Braunschweig-Lüneburg had, from 1588 to 1591, also given succor to another pioneer of the spiritual and scientific movement. August's father, Duke Heinrich Julius, approved the printing of a number of works by scientific and Hermetic genius and martyr Giordano Bruno (1548–1600). Bruno's treatise on "the thirty lights," *Sigillum sigillorum* (The image of the images), continued Bruno's fascination with the number thirty. His *On the Shadows of Ideas* (Paris, 1582) was divided into groups of thirty. Bruno lectured in Paris on thirty "divine attributes," a figure he seems to have found in the traditions of Hebrew Kabbalah.

According to Bruno, there were thirty archetypal images of great magical power. The images absorbed the original divine, creative ideas: the principles of the divine intellect. The images bore the essential substance and so were superior to discursive, earthly philosophy. The images, argued Bruno, point to the divine intellect, symbolized by the sun; thus, they are "lights" that show the way. We may recall that Christian Rosenkreuz, in *The Chemical Wedding*, has been shown "many great mysteries" by "the Father of Lights." Rosenkreuz's tomb in the *Fama* is, as we shall see, lit by an "inner sun" reflected in the images that surround its center.

Bruno also refers in his works to "thirty shadows," "thirty links," and "thirty seals." in *De vinculis in genere* (Concerning the in-born links) the thirty "links" are subsumed beneath thirty heads.[2] The combination of the thirty is the enlightening mind of God, accessible through a system of occult signs.

The thirty "shadows" may be replaced by "thirty statues": interior images constructed as talismans, drawing higher energies into the core of the magus. Drawing divine energies into statues was, according to the Hermetic tradition, the chief magical art of the ancient Egyptians.

It may be the case that the root of the reference to the “thirty” behind the *Fama* resides in an in-joke about the true nature of the inspiration behind the *Fama*: the thirty “heads” combine to produce a total illumination for those with the eyes to see it. Perhaps it was one of Andreae’s own in-jokes, hiding, as was his wont, behind a coterie.

Furthermore, Bruno is supposed to have founded a secret sect of “Giordanisti,” suspected by Rome of being a conspiracy to overthrow the church in favor of a Hermetic Egyptian cult, supported by Protestants hostile to Rome.

Bruno’s fundamental intention was a revived ancient synthesis of science and religion. In Bruno’s *Thirty Seals*, for example, he says the four guides of religion are Love, Magic, Art, and Mathesis (symbolic and magical mathematics): a quaternity not at all unsympathetic to what will later be called Rosicrucianism.

It should also be noted that Bruno’s *De entis descensu, lampas metaphysica* (Of the descending sword, metaphysical torch; Zurich, 1585) was edited by Raphael Eglin, the man who almost certainly insisted on the publication of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* in Kassel in 1615.

The plot is thick, but I think that the answer to the question about the authorship of the project is simple. The most suggestive and most specific evidence points to the project as having come from two rather different people whose talents, when combined, generated something more potent than either might have come up with alone. Johann Valentin Andreae and Tobias Hess conceived of the project secretly together; the plain evidence is overwhelming.

AUGUSTUS, PRINCE ELECTOR OF ANHALT

During the 1980s, Dr. Carlos Gilly, an expert archivist working for Joost Ritman’s Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica in Amsterdam, discovered over a thousand pages of correspondence that had once flowed between Prince Elector of the Holy Roman Empire August von Anhalt (based at Zurbst and Plötzkau) and the Paracelsian alchemist Carl Widemann in Augsburg, Landesarchiv Oranienbaum des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt; 1611–14 (The Oranienbaum Archive of Sachsen-Anhalt; 1611–14).

Widemann had worked as secretary to Sir Edward Kelley, scryer to John Dee (1587–88), and was a collector of works by spiritual radicals Caspar Schwenckfeld, Adam Haslmayr, and Valentin Weigel.

Widemann's patron was the youngest of three princely brothers of Anhalt (August, Christian, and Ludwig), a keen devotee of alchemy with a strong appreciation of Paracelsus. History records a medal struck by the prince's order, made, he believed, from alchemical gold. August also owned a secret printing press at his castle at Plötzkau, southeast of Magdeburg in Sachsen-Anhalt. August's inquiries concerning the fraternity of the Rose Cross represent the first-known response to the manuscript of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. They are thus of the greatest significance to our story.

Adam Haslmayr (ca. 1560–1630), a friendly contact of Carl Widemann, recorded that he had first seen a manuscript of the *Fama* in the Tyrol (where he lived at Heilegenkreuz) in 1610. Haslmayr had been a notary public to the archduke Maximilian of Austria, as well as being a Paracelsisan doctor, musician, and teacher. He had learned his medical skills from Paracelsus's last living assistant, Lorenz Lutz.

In December 1611, Haslmayr sent Augustus a copy of the *Fama*, together with his response to it, as a New Year's present.

Augustus was deeply moved by the *Fama* and told Widemann in a letter of January 1612 he would "commit it to his heart with all fear of God." Augustus was also fascinated by the idea expressed by Haslmayr that the *Fama* might be published. He might have been interested in doing it himself. But first he wanted to obtain the *Fama's* promised follow- up, the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, and any other work by the fraternity. He was particularly interested in knowing when the Fama had been produced. As for the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, "If the gentleman [Haslmayr] were to know any more of this that would be very dear to me."

Augustus was extremely keen to make contact with the fraternity, but knew from the *Fama*'s contents that such would be no straightforward matter. Having considered the problem of how best to proceed, it appears that Augustus decided to print Haslmayr's response himself, in the hope of drawing out the brotherhood. He reckoned Haslmayr's *Antwort*, addressed to the brotherhood, was so insightful and pious, "a truly excellent great work," it stood a good chance of eliciting some kind of response, since the fraternity

had promised not to ignore sincere entreaties.

By the summer, there had still been no response from the brotherhood. In a letter of July 21, 1612, to Carl Widemann, Prince August expressed concern that in spite of Widemann's friend Adam Halsmayr having written a fulsome and flattering reply to the *Fama* (printed probably at August's press at Plötzkau in March 1612), there had been a resounding and mysterious silence from the brotherhood.

August suggested Widemann get on with obtaining the promised follow-up to the *Fama*, the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, from the "Doctor of Tübingen," because "this man had to know who was the first distributor of the *Fama Fraternitatis*" and therefore must have known the whereabouts of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* and other writings.

"It is really important to me how one might get to grips with the fraternity R.C.," implored the elector. Augustus's words would certainly have been taken as serious pressure by Carl Widemann. He was expected to perform; Widemann did his best.

In the margin, at the point in Augustus's letter where he mentioned the "Doctor of Tübingen," Widemann wrote " *factum* D[r] Hess." *Factum* means "done" or "accomplished." Widemann had written (presumably) to Dr. Hess about getting hold of a copy of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*. This can only mean that Dr. Tobias Hess was the active source of distribution of the manuscript *Fama*.

The question as to why Augustus would have to wait two years to see a copy of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* has not been satisfactorily answered; perhaps it had simply not been written or edited yet. Furthermore, as we shall see, events would take a strange turn in the summer of 1612, and their painful dénouement would up the stakes considerably.

It would seem to be the case that neither Widemann nor his patron in Sachsen-Anhalt believed that the Doctor of Tübingen was himself a member of the secret brotherhood, only the point of distribution. Hess, it would appear, was acting as an agent for the brotherhood, or perhaps had simply "come upon" the manuscript, as was often the case in the mythology of obtaining manuscripts of alchemical and occult value. In this period, it would have been quite reasonable to many minds to posit angelic activity in such matters.

So we see Hess playing a role in the dissemination of the *Fama* in 1612 and presumably before that. It is, as we shall see, significant that when Adam Haslmayr decided to go in search of a member of the brotherhood himself (in the late summer of 1612), he did not go to Tübingen, even though the as-yet-unseen *Confessio Fraternitatis* was expected to come from there. As far as we know, Widemann never received a reply from Dr. Hess.

The second piece of evidence is a straightforward note attached to a manuscript of the *Fama Fraternitatis* belonging to Christoph Besold (1577–1649) and now in the Salzburg University Library. Besold wrote: "*Autorem suspicor J.V.A.*" (I suspect the writer J.V.A.). According to Besold, the author of the *Fama Fraternitatis* was suspected to be Johann Valentin Andreae. If Besold knew for sure, then he must have had reason to be indirect about the authorship. If he did not know for sure, then he was certainly not involved with its creation.

Either way, it would be hard to use this evidence as a support for the view that the *Fama* was written by Besold in concert with Hess and Andreae. The statement puts distance between himself and his younger friend in the matter of the responsibility for the brotherhood. As we shall soon discover, he would have ample reason to do so.

My own reading of the clipped phrase could be expressed in colloquial English as: "looks like one of Andreae's"—one of Andreae's clever games, as an understanding old friend would say. This might suggest that Andreae kept the work secret even from an intimate friend from whom he had learned so much and with whom he shared many essential insights of spiritual theology.

Hess, it appears then, played the front man. The real source was apparently a closely guarded secret. Andreae could watch the unfolding of the game through a gauze. It is even possible that Hess himself was unaware that Andreae had written the tract. After all, a man who could pin an anonymous rude poem about the chancellor's wife on the chancellor's door and who would write an anonymous attack on the whole university system while resting in its bowers might yet be a man who could drop some manuscripts into the chaotic house of Hess while the older chap wasn't looking (Hess had at least twelve children and found running his house with extremely difficult marital relations a nightmare).

We do not know if Andreae had ever showed his *Chemical Wedding* fantasy to anyone. Nevertheless, it seems most likely that Andreae and Hess were drawn to the idea together, if for no other reason than that the *Fama Fraternitatis* contained ideas and implications that were more to the taste of Hess than of Andreae—and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* even more so. On the other hand, that might only have made the document the more attractive to Hess. Notwithstanding, there is other evidence to link the minds of Hess and Andreae in a publishing exercise, but again, the tale is tangled by an Andreae constitutionally, spiritually, or psychologically loath to ascribe his sole name to anything directly.

In 1616, two years after Hess's death, a little spiritual work called the *Theca gladii spiritus* (The spirit of the sheathed sword; Strasbourg, 1616) was published (anonymously again), consisting of eight hundred Latin aphorisms.

Andreae liked to hide behind his work; he did not seek personal fame and preferred to remain hidden. He was sensitive and mistrusting. In the context of the times, his stance was perhaps realistic, but the deeper motivation for this approach is shown by Andreae's choice of name for his literary character Peregrinus. The word not only suggests "wandering abroad," but specifically means "foreigner," or, more appositely, "alien."

Andreae felt himself to be an alien in the world. While this word has powerful resonance with the Gnostic tradition of the *allogenes*, the outsider "of another race" unable to find a home in this world, it also chimes in with Besold's observation that the true Christian should not live in the world as if he belonged to it. The world, Besold believed, was a sect separated from God; one had to be redeemed from it, and the process was not as easy as the quick-fix, born-again evangelists might suppose.

Life is a pilgrimage; the destination lies beyond this life and this world. What use fame in such a life? Like Descartes, Andreae's preference was to remain hidden.

On the other hand, we also know that Andreae was not averse to putting his name within the context of groups or intimate associations. In 1614 he formed a mathematical society whose twelve members included Abraham Hölzl and Christoph Besold. In 1620, Andreae formed a Christian Society (Societas Christiana), which joined his name to friends who included

Wilhelm Bidenbach, Wilhelm Schickard, and Johann Arndt. Andreae was also a member of the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft (Fruit-bringing Society), a cultural society founded in 1617 by August of Anhalt's brother Ludwig.

In the *Theca*'s preface, the author states that the work has come out of the printed and unprinted works of the late Tobias Hess. However, as in the case of *The Chemical Wedding*, Andreae would wait twenty-six years before informing his patron, August von Braunschweig-Lüneburg, in Andreae's short autobiography (*Vita ab ipso conscripta*, Life writes itself; ms., Wolfenbüttel, 1630), that while being in fact himself the author of the *Theca gladii spiritus*, it had always been in his mind to impute the authorship to Hess.

Roland Edighoffer is nonetheless satisfied that Hess did provide material used in the *Theca*, a contribution that possibly included twentyeight aphorisms that also appeared in the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, shorn of references to the fraternity and replaced by the words "the humble" or "the good." If Andreae wrote these, then he was probably the author of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, but for reasons of his own wished to refocus the spiritual content of that work in a pure, not fictional direction. And yet he could not avoid confusing the matter of authorship. Was this because he was aware of how much his thoughts and writings had developed under Hess's influence?

Hess had come fully alive in Andreae's imagination, almost as an independent extension of the physical being of Hess. Or is it rather that Hess somehow embodied an archetypal mythic being in Andreae's psyche, and as with all archetypes, there was a dynamic ambiguity?

In 1628, when writing a recommendation for Hess's son, Christoph Besold reminded the youth that his father was famed for his spiritual zeal and fear of God, and these qualities would not remain concealed in the *Theca*. Besold must have known who was the author of the work but seems content to have accepted the ascription to Hess. Indeed, Besold's own work was not absent from the *Theca*.

A statement later going under Besold's name in his *De complexu omnium disciplinarum* (From the embracing of all learning, 1621) also appeared in the *Theca*, whose second clause was also to be found in the *Confessio Fraternitatis*. Besold wrote, "Our knowledge consists of the spiritual capacity

of human beings and of a certain higher wisdom. It contains much of theology, much of medicine, little of jurisprudence.” Carlos Gilly has asked whether this was a hedged-about nod to the person of Tobias Hess, who, while skilled in jurisprudence, nonetheless busied himself with mystical questions about the end of the world.

The *Theca* may have been put together by Andreae as a kind of justification of Tobias Hess’s essential spiritual purity and fundamental doctrinal orthodoxy. He was profoundly concerned that Hess be seen by history in the right light; Hess was attacked even after his death.

The work may also have been intended to be read as a corrective to the dangerous fantasies that had emerged from the innocent fantasy of Christian Rosenkreuz. The *Theca* was published in the same year as *The Chemical Wedding* and printed by the same printer, Lazarus Zetzner, in Strasbourg.

Christoph Besold, *De verae philosophiae fundamento discursus*, Tübingen, I. A. Cellius, 1618. (Artwork courtesy of the Universitätsbibliothek, Salzburg.)

It would seem to be the case that Andreae could not think of the *fratres R.C.* without thinking also of Tobias Hess.

Finally, we should note that in Andreae’s autobiographical manuscript, he stated—“in a sybilline manner,” according to Edighoffer in *Les Rose-Croix*—that he had devoted the early part of 1610 to “divers writings” later published by other people.

In his life summary covering the year 1610, Andreae says that he

undertook foreign journeys in France, Italy, and Spain for study purposes. Given that Adam Haslmayr said that he had first seen the *Fama* in the Tyrol in 1610, Andreae's typically ambivalent statement may be taken as as clear an indication as one is likely ever to get that Andreae probably wrote the *Fama* in early 1610, possibly for private distribution, or as a private exercise. Perhaps he was not exactly sure *what* to do with it; it may have come to him from pure inspiration, welling up after years of frustration.

As far as we can tell, Andreae never planned to publish or make known to the general public the *Fama Fraternitatis*. Such an intention may have been wise, but was, as it transpired, in vain.

ENTER THE ROSICRUCIANS

And so it appears that the invisible brotherhood, the *fratres R.C.*, would turn out to be not the authors or author of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, but a significant proportion of those who responded to it.

Many were so attracted to what they read, they could not resist identifying with the fraternity—and, it is pertinent to ask, what a work of magical genius was that, to render the invisible visible and the visible invisible? How do you create a movement? Answer: Convince a significant number of people that the movement has already begun. Thus, as the Paracelsians believed, the imagination, not the unsheathed sword, was the all-important means of magical transformation.

FIVE

FAMA FRATERNITATIS, OR THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE MOST COMMENDABLE ORDER ROSEAE CRUCIS

We the brothers of the fraternity of the R.C. bestow our Greeting, Love and Prayers upon each and everyone who reads this our Fama of Christian intent.

Seeing the only Wise and Merciful God in these latter days hath poured out so richly his mercy and goodness to Mankind, whereby we do attain more and more to the perfect knowledge of his Son Jesus Christ and of Nature, that justly we may boast of the happy time, wherein there is not only discovered unto us the half part of the World, which was heretofore unknown & hidden, but he hath also made manifest unto us many wonderful, and never-heretofore seen, Works and Creatures of Nature, and moreover hath raised men, gifted with great Wisdom, which might partly renew and reduce all Arts (in this our Age spotted and imperfect) to perfection; so that finally Man might thereby understand his own Nobility and Worth, and why he is called Microcosmus, and how far his knowledge extendeth into Nature.

FAMA FRATERNITATIS, CASSELL, 1614

The curtains open on the *Fama* with a marvelous, positive oration on the best of the Renaissance promise. We should not be surprised had it been Chorus's opening speech in act 1, scene 1, of a fine Shakespearean drama.

But this is an Andreaean drama, with a sting in its golden tail.

The hero is introduced—not, as one might expect, “Christian Rosenkreuz.” We are kept in suspense for his entry onto the stage; the first hero of the *Fama* is Man.

The Dignity of Man, announced by Pico della Mirandola in Florence in 1486 as the centerpiece of a Hermetically inspired revolution of thought, has, the *Fama* observes, been at work in the world. Human dignity lies in being able to choose between the life of the beasts and the life of the angels. Human beings may move up or down the great Chain of Being according to their will; they have a miraculous power they seldom realize. Human beings can have the mind of a vegetable, or they can find their highest nature in “the solitary darkness of God.” The spark of divine knowledge resides within them.

Where this dignity has been permitted to flourish, where this seed has been cultivated, there stand the high achievements of the age: all manner of arts, sciences, machines, and monuments to humankind’s limitless spirit. The work is by no means complete, however. Humanity stands on the cusp of something even greater.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, whose *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (Oration on the Dignity of Man) (1486) was described by Ernesto Garin as the “manifesto of the Renaissance.”

A complete system of knowledge awaits humankind as human minds penetrate into the darkest recesses of nature. Then Man, the little cosmos with a potentially godlike mind, will truly know what an extraordinary creature he

is, linked to the divine, from Earth to the stars and beyond.

Of course, it is a perennial cause of dismay that not everyone sees it like that.

> Although the rude World herewith will be but little pleased, but rather smile and scoff thereat; also the Pride and Covetousness of the Learned is so great, it will not suffer them to agree together; but were they united, they might out of all those things which in this our Age God doth so richly bestow upon us, collect *Librum Naturae,* or a perfect Method of all Arts: but such is their opposition, that they still keep, and are loath to leave the old course, esteeming Popery, Aristotle, and Galen, yea and that which hath but a mere show of learning, more than the clear and manifested Light and Truth; who if they were now living, with much joy would leave their erroneous Doctrines. But here is too great weakness for such a great Work: And although in Theology, Physics, and the Mathematics, the Truth doth manifest itself; nevertheless the old Enemy by his subtlety and craft doth show himself in hindering every good purpose by his Instruments and contentious wavering people. To such an intent of a general Reformation, the most godly and highly illuminated Father, our Brother, C.R. a German, the chief and original of our Fraternity, hath much and long time laboured, who by reason of his poverty (although descended of Noble Parents) in the fifth year of his age was placed in a Cloister, where he had learned indifferently the Greek and Latin Tongues, who (upon his earnest desire and request) being yet in his growing years, was associated to a Brother, P.A.L. who had determined to go to the Holy Land.

Andreae soon gets to the point. The learned, instead of seizing the incredible potential of the times, spend their time in useless bickering, attacking and scoffing at those who lift their heads above the common mud. Instead of combining their minds in a common effort to order knowledge based on investigation and experience, they rely on past authority and a religious leadership devoid of spiritual depth and understanding. Had the men they claim to follow been alive, those very men would themselves have been only too ready to cast aside old theories and embrace new knowledge—so

even the bad teachers' vaunted respect for past genius is counterfeit.

Galen would have changed his mind had he met Paracelsus: Galen's disciples should do what their alleged master would have done.

Nevertheless, there is unexpected hope. The situation had been foreseen by a German (we never hear his name), one C.R. (Andreae might have been indulging in a private double meaning; "C.R." could be "Christian Rosenkreuz" and/or Christianus Renatus: the Christian Reborn who is such an incandescent feature of Andreae's later works.)

Desperate for liberation from a dull monastic setting, C.R. begs to travel to the Holy Land. This may well be an allegory for the true Christian (or godlike) spirit suffocating under the old Roman Catholic, scholastic, and monastic system.

> Although this Brother died in Cyprus, and so never came to Jerusalem, yet our Brother C.R. did not return, but shipped himself over, and went to Damascus, minding from thence to go to Jerusalem; but by reason of the feebleness of his body he remained still there, and by his skill in Physick [medicine] he obtained much favour with the Turks: In the mean time he became by chance acquainted with the Wise men of Damcar in Arabia, and beheld what great Wonders they wrought, and how Nature was discovered unto them; hereby was that high and noble Spirit of Brother C.R. so stirred up, that Jerusalem was not so much now in his mind as Damcar; also he could not bridle his desires any longer, but made a bargain with the Arabians, that they should carry him for a certain sum of money to Damcar; he was but of the age of sixteen years when he came thither, yet of a strong German constitution; there the Wise received him (as he himself witnessseth) not as a stranger, but as one whom they had long expected, they called him by his name, and showed him other secrets out of his Cloister, whereat he could not but mightily wonder: He learned there better the Arabian Tongue; so that the year following he translated the *Book M.* into good Latin, which he afterwards brought with him. This is the place where he did learn his Physick [medicine], and his Mathematics, whereof the World hath just cause to rejoice, if there were more Love, and less Envy. After three years he returned again with good consent, shipped himself over *Sinus Arabicus* [the Red Sea] into Egypt,

> where he remained not long, but only took better notice there of the Plants and Creatures; he sailed over the whole Mediterranean Sea for to come unto Fez, where the Arabians had directed him. And it is a great shame unto us, that wise men, so far remote the one from the other, should not only be of one opinion, hating all contentious Writings, but also be so willing and ready under the seal of secrecy to impart their secrets to others.

The idea of a young Christian visiting Arabia and gaining knowledge was hardly a new one, even in the world of imaginative fiction in Andreae's time. Furthermore, the essence of the adventure reflects the historical facts of what actually took place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries during the period of struggle for control of the Holy Land commonly known as the Crusades. Knowledge headed from East to West.

Large quantities of classical writings had been preserved and subsequently translated into Syriac and Arabic in territories that, since the seventh and eighth centuries, were subjected to various kinds of Islamic rule. Arabic-literate sages had also taken classical mathematics, physics, chemistry, mechanics, architecture, philosophy, and poetry to new heights of achievement, where, that is, the rulers had been sympathetic to research and development.

DAMCAR AND THE SABIANS

Notable in this process of translation and research was the Sabian intellectual community of Baghdad, which thrived under an enlightened caliphate between the ninth and mid-tenth centuries AD. These Sabians had, in order to qualify for respect as "people of the Book" as directed by the Koran, taken the philosophical writings of Hermes Trismegistus as their prophetic work, their holy book.

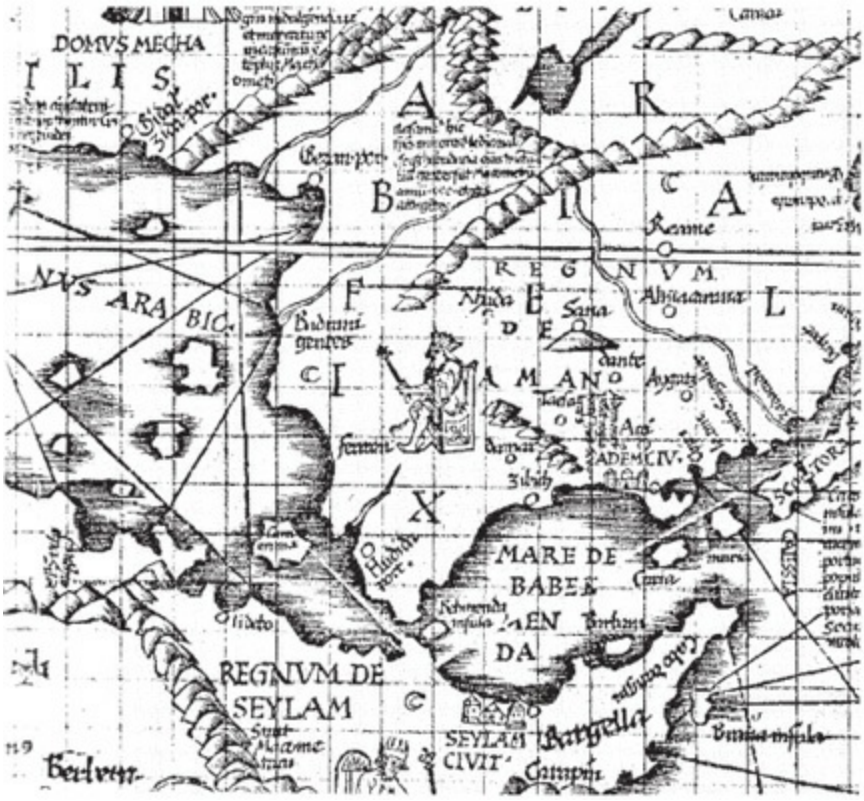
The philosophy of Hermes was congenial to Baghdad's Muslim authorities because it respected the unity of God and the cosmos. Hermes was congenial to the so-called Sabians because they had originally come from Harran in northern Syria, where the lights of the cosmos were venerated; Harran had seven temples, each dedicated to a planet.

Since Hermes was also regarded as a patron of astronomical knowledge, the Sabians were doubly content to venerate him and the traditions he had come to represent. Thus, in the Middle Ages, Hermes held an equal or even superior status to Aristotle and Plato. That knowledge of Hermes was associated with the Sabians would have been well known both to Christoph Besold (who wrote a book on the sects of "the Saracens") and to Tübingen Orientalist Wilhelm Schickard. Furthermore, Tobias Hess would have been more than familiar with the work of Abu Ma'shar, whose writings on trigons and great conjunctions depended on the Sabian teachings on both planetary significance and the seven angelic ages, of which the seventh would be the last.

By implication, the *Fama* cheekily suggests that the knowledge on which the whole edifice of Kepler's, Röslin's, Postel's, Brocardo's, Studion's, and Hess's interpretations of *novae* and planetary conjunctions derived from secret work undertaken by the young C.R. at the beginning of the fifteenth century. C.R. had obtained his nectarious cup at first hand. What else might be learned?

Andreae does not call his wise men of Damcar "Sabians." However, that he places them in Damcar, far from Jerusalem, leaves us in no doubt as to the broad identity of C.R.'s teachers.

"Damcar" was a misprint for "Damar" on Abraham Ortelius's map of the world (*Theatrum orbis terrarum*, The theater of the lands of the Earth; Antwerp, 1570). The city was, however, correctly named as "Damar" on Martin Waldseemüller's *Carta marina* (A map of the seas; 1516), but even on that map the second a could easily be read as *ca*, so it is possible that Ortelius stood in a line of cartographers who misread Waldseemüller's map or who followed an original error.



Waldseemüller's Carta marina, showing Arabia; "Damar" or "Damcar" may be seen to the right of the king's throne at the center.

Damar was a long way from Europe—so far, in fact, that when the *Fama Fraternitatis* was translated into English, the translator thought that the writer of "Damcar" must have meant "Damasco" (Damascus), so that in the first printed version in England (1652), C.R. makes a costly journey from Damasco to Damasco! Some confusion must have arisen, but such was the veneration in which the text was held that there is, to my knowledge, no record of complaint. Perhaps the error was considered to conceal a hidden meaning! Where "Damcar" has been permitted to stand, some commentators have observed that transliterated into Hebrew, "Damcar" means "blood of the lamb." Can valid symbolism emerge from typographical error? Apparently so.

Damar was, in fact, a city inland from the eastern shore of the Red Sea, in Yemen, and associated with legends of the Queen of Sheba, or Saba, whence it has been conjectured the Sabians derived their original name. Yemen also had a long-standing trading and political relationship with Ethiopia, to the southwest. There is still some dispute over whether the queen who astonished

Solomon the Wise came from Yemen or Ethiopia, or both. This is significant because the only complete edition of the Book of Enoch was an Ethiopic version. Why do I mention the Book of Enoch?

Enoch was an apocryphal, apocalyptic Jewish work containing much information on the government of the stars and planets by angels. It was not only consulted by Postel, but John Dee and Edward Kelley also relied heavily on its alleged prophetic powers. In fact, their version was the actual copy formerly belonging to Friar Roger Bacon, peppered with the "English Leonardo's" annotations. Dee used the book in association with Abu Ma'shar, so it is quite possible that the reference to the wise men of "Damcar" also contains an allusion to the source of the Book of Enoch, especially when one considers that the biblical Enoch (who was taken to heaven before death struck him) was also identified in Sabian circles with Hermes.

C.R. does not leave Damcar (after three years) without a good book. The book called *M* may mean *mundus*, the world, a possible allusion to Paracelsus's insistence on the light to be found in the "book of Nature." Nature does not lie or pervert the truth.

When we also consider that the sixteenth-century Arab chronicler known to Europeans as Joannes Leo Africanus (ca. 1485–1554, *History and Description of Africa*, 1526) also related how the Sabians could pursue their planetary worship in peace at Damar's Arabic university, we get a good idea of the kind of thing C.R. was learning during his sojourn in *Arabia felix*.

Arabia felix, incidentally, means the fertile part of Arabia—the fruitgiving part, as contrasted with *Arabia deserta*—an apt location for C.R's education, or reeducation. Furthermore, the manner in which C.R. is taught, as well as the vital substance of the teaching, is presented as an example to Europeans that ought to shame the lords of Christian universities and schools. This sustained polemic concerning the corruption of learning in Europe is undoubtedly the keynote of the *Fama* and is clearly a viewpoint in which the minds and experience of Hess and Andreae found precise harmony. If Europeans wished to participate in any promised golden age, they were going to have to reassess their priorities—and fast.

Was Andreae also perhaps teasing Hess with the criticism that the intellectual troglodytes of Europe simply were not up to the demands of any

apocalyptic new age? Man “the great Miracle” (as Hermes calls him in the *Asclepius*) had, since the death of Paracelsus in 1541, slunk back into narrow-mindedness.

There was more sense to be found in Arabia than there was in Tübingen.

It ought to be added that we cannot be sure that the persons who venerated the stars at Damar were of the same origin or spiritual community as the “Sabians” who took that name for convenience in circa AD 830 in Harran, during the rule of the caliph al-Mamun. However, the origin of the Sabians and the exact meaning of the word are questions still open to debate. For example, the word *sabian* is also linked to the practice of baptism and has been applied to the Mandaeans of Iraq, who hold Gnostic beliefs and venerate the memory and example of the prophet John, whom Christians call “the Baptist.”

The word *sabian* has also been linked to the Kurdish Yezidis, who today live a sporadically persecuted existence in northern Iraq and Georgian Armenia. The nineteenth-century British archaeologist of Nineveh, Austin Henry Layard, who also explored the Yezidi community and faith, set great store on a tradition that the Yezidis had come from southern Iraq and so speculated links with the “Sabians” and Mandaeans, with whom the Yezidis share some food taboos and traditions, such as representing the angelic “lord of this world” as a peacock. Chwolsohn and other scholars have reckoned that the roots of both traditions go back to a more ancient faith, preceding Zoroastrianism. Scholar Philip Kreyenbroek has identified survivals of Gnostic ideas in contemporary Yezidi beliefs.

The Yezidi teachers of today show no particular expertise in the practice of astronomy or any of the sciences associated with the heyday of the Sabians of Baghdad or Harran, but that golden age was all a very, very long time ago, and there has been thoroughgoing persecution and impoverishment of the Yezidis since the late Middle Ages; their centers of worship have been gutted persistently since that time. Nevertheless, the Yezidis do hold firmly to an angelology that bears significant comparison with the seven-angel system normally called Chaldean and associated with the Sabians and the Book of Enoch, as well as some early Gnostic groups.

It should also be observed that a veneration for the sun is built into Yezidi devotional exercises, while images of the moon and stars and a remarkable

serpent are also features of their holiest places of veneration, situated about the “market of mystical knowledge” at Lalish in the Hakkari Mountains of northern Iraq.

Yezidi literature asserts boldly that Yezidis are the descendants of the holy lineage of Seth, Adam’s third son, who stands at the fount of a line of Gnostic and privileged awareness and knowledge, familiar to Hermetic traditions and strongly associated with early Rosicrucian speculations. As we shall see, C.R. imitates the legendary provisions of Seth in the manner of his entombment.

Nevertheless, all we can say for sure is that there are elements in common between these traditions, while adding for speculative interest the fact that the Yezidis venerate the twelfth- to thirteenth-century Sufi master Sheykh Adi, whom Yezidis regard as an incarnation of divine spirit (the Sufis appeared at about the time the “Sabians” of Baghdad disappeared in c. AD 1050), and the Yezidi sheikhs of today wear a red ribbon across their chests, not unlike the garb of Christian Rosenkreuz in *The Chemical Wedding*.

Andreae’s conception of the wise men of Damcar resonates with all these traditions and seems more matter-of-fact than the magical-romantic magi, the “relics from the golden age” inhabiting “the land of legend” who appear in the world-famous Rosicrucian-style fantasy *The Thief of Baghdad*, produced by Alexander Korda in 1940.

The magi of Damcar know that C.R. is coming to them; the text does not say how, but the implication constellates a set of ideas around the Magi, who knew that the Messiah’s star had finally come in the Gospel According to Matthew, thought to have been composed in the region of Edessa, less than fifty miles north of Harran.

According to Hermes, God speaks to humankind through the universe. Europe was not listening; the wise men were. They could read the signs of the times (*Signs of the Times* was the title of a book by Besold, published in Tübingen in 1614). Thus, C.R. takes on the mantle of interpreter. He interprets the times and he offers, in due course, his solution. That is to say, he diagnoses the illness and offers a cure.

C.R’s own learning period is, however, far from complete. He is advised by the wise of Damcar to honor Fez with a visit. The name Fez, according to cartographer Gerardus Mercator, was thought to mean a place “of gold.” There, the art of transmutation was studied by many alchemists. They came

together (again the cooperation-in-learning theme) in a temple to discuss new discoveries, not to wrangle and show off for the sake of it. They came to share new knowledge with those who could be trusted with it.

The savants of Fez used a circular drawing of the heavens called a Zairagia, which was used in conjunction with an Arabic qabalah or numerological alphabet. Allah had written his creative mind into the fabric of the universe, and the wise could decode it. From observing the wise of Fez, C.R. devised his own, infallible *Axiomata*.

Readers may note in these passages the heavy stress laid on learning from the example of the Arabians and Africans. Here was a righteous stick with which to beat the big-headed universities, arrogant clergy, and assorted learned dogs in the manger.

> Every year the Arabians and Africans do send one to another, inquiring one of another out of their Arts, if happily they had found out some better things, or if Experience had weakened their Reasons. Yearly there came something to light, whereby the Mathematics, Physic and Magic (for in those are they of Fez most skilful) were amended; as there is nowadays in Germany no want of learned Men, Magicians, Cabalists, Physicians, and Philosophers, were there but more love and kindness among them, or that the most part of them would not keep their secrets close only to themselves. At Fez he did get acquaintance with those which are commonly called the Elementary Inhabitants, who revealed unto him many of their secrets: As we Germans likewise might gather together many things, if there were the like unity, and desire of searching out of secrets amongst us.

"Elementary Inhabitants" refers to the inhabitants of the (four) elements. When the famous physician and botanist Erasmus Darwin (Charles Darwin's grandfather) was writing his poetic and scientific commentary *The Botanic Garden* (1792), he wrote in his introduction of how he had divided up his material in a manner he called "Rosicrucian"—that is, he employed the images of Salamanders (fire), Undines (water), Gnomes (earth), and Sylphs (air). These were the creatures in which the "inhabitants" of the elements took form. Paracelsus's book *On Nymphs, Sylphs, Pygmies and Salamanders*

had been published two hundred years before by Johann Huser in 1591. It obviously made an impact.

Paracelsus asserted that the elementary inhabitants were distinguished from Adamic creatures by virtue of their having a subtle flesh. While this flesh is unredeemed (they have no soul), they can yet do strange things like travel through walls while in many respects resembling humankind. God makes them appear to human eyes so as to show us the wonders of his marvelous Book of Nature. The inhabitants have "attitude" and reason. Dallying with them is dangerous for humans, however, since the inhabitants have knowledge that is not theirs, including prophetic knowledge and a human reason joined to that of discarnate intelligences.

The nymphs appeared on the fifth day of Andreae's *Chemical Wedding*, conducting the seven symbolic boats to the Olympus tower to witness the nuptial regeneration.

According to Paracelsus, scientific knowledge of nature lay in the gift of elemental entities accessible by magic. So was this magic, or science—or both?

> Of these of Fez he often did confess, that their Magia was not altogether pure, and also that their Cabala was defiled with their Religion; but notwithstanding he knew how to make good use of the same, and found still more better grounds of his Faith, altogether agreeable with the Harmony of the whole World, and wonderfully impressed in all Periods of times, and thence proceedeth that fair Concord, that as in every several kernel is contained a whole good tree or fruit, so likewise is included in the little body of Man the whole great World, whose Religion, policy, health, members, nature, language, words and works, are agreeing, sympathising, and in equal tune and melody with God, Heaven and Earth; and that which is disagreeing with them, is error, falsehood and of the Devil, who alone is the first, middle, and last cause of strife, blindness, and darkness in the World: Also, might one examine all and several persons upon the Earth, he should find that which is good and right, is always agreeing with it self; but all the rest is spotted with a thousand erroneous conceits.

Where there is disharmony, there is error. Therefore, since the universities and churches are full of bitterness and wrangling, some vital principles of harmony must have been lost. After all, the Book of Nature is harmoniously proportioned, so that stars do not collide, nor trees turn into birds.

A key work of the Italian Renaissance in this regard was Francesco Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi* (On the harmony of the world; 1525). Giorgi (1466–1540) was a Christian Cabalist who, following Pico and Johannes Reuchlin, believed that Hebrew Kabbalah proved the truth of Christianity, and that, as Pico (known as the Conte di Concordia or Count of Concord) maintained, all this knowledge (including the Hermetic "revelation") harmonized with the universe so finely as to suggest a great cosmic geometry in which humankind could find both its right place and its great freedom. The universe was a magnificent Temple whose numerical characteristics extended from the lowest levels all the way up to the Creator himself.

The reader may be assured that Andreae is invoking this kind of knowledge when he speaks of C.R. in relation to concord, harmony, and mathematics, while at the same time applying these harmonies to humanity's essential being and ideal social and intellectual relations. Little wonder, then, that Susanna Åkerman, for one, has described the *Fama* as "a visionary tract," though, remarkably, it does not read like one. That is because it derives from an essentially refined and rational mind: that of Andreae, the modest magus who resented affectation.

C.R. will offer the keys to establish right relations between humans and nature. Humankind is a little world, and the principles that may be seen in the great world or *macrocosmus* may be faithfully applied to humankind's own system, if, that is, it avoids the temptations of the Enemy, the Devil.

This also reads like a blueprint of eighteenth-century Masonic principles and as such may well be derived in part from the *Fama Fraternitatis*. If that be the case, then the *Fama* may be justly said to have changed history.

> After two years Brother R.C. departed the City Fez, and sailed with many costly things into Spain, hoping well, he himself had so well and so profitably spent his time in his travel, that the learned in Europe would highly rejoice with him, and begin to rule, and order all their Studies, according to those sound and sure Foundations. He therefore conferred

with the Learned in Spain, showing unto them the Errors of our Arts, and how they might be corrected, and from whence they should gather the true *Indicia* of the Times to come, and wherein they ought to agree with those things that are past; also how the faults of the Church and the whole *Philosophia Moralis* was to be amended: He showed them new Growths, new Fruits, and Beasts, which did concord with old Philosophy, and prescribed them new *Axiomata*, whereby all things might fully be restored: But it was to them a laughing matter; and being a new thing unto them, they feared that their great Name should be lessened, if they should now again begin to learn and acknowledge their many years Errors, to which they were accustomed, and wherewith they had gained them enough: Who so loveth unquietness, let him be reformed.

The same Song was also sung to him by other Nations, the which moved him the more (because it happened to him contrary to his expectation,) being then ready bountifully to impart all his Arts and Secrets to the Learned, if they would have but undertaken to write the true and infallible *Axiomata*, out of all Faculties, Sciences and Arts, and whole Nature, as that which he knew would direct them, like a Globe, or Circle, to the only middle Point, and *Centrum*, and (as it is usual among the Arabians) it should only serve to the wise and learned for a Rule, that also there might be a Society in Europe, which might have Gold, Silver, and precious Stones, sufficient for to bestow them on Kings, for their necessary uses, and lawful purposes: with which such as be Governors might be brought up, for to learn all that which God hath suffered Man to know, and thereby to be enabled in all times of need to give their counsel unto those that seek it, like the Heathen Oracles: Verily we must confess that the world in those days was already big with those great Commotions, labouring to be delivered of them; and did bring forth painstaking, worthy men, who brake with all force through Darkness and Barbarism, and left us who succeeded to follow them: and assuredly they have been the uppermost point in *Trigono igneo*, whose flame now should be more and more brighter, and shall undoubtedly give to the World the last Light.

The reference to the globe or circle combines the idea of the Arabians’ use of

the circular Zairagia, or map of the heavens, with the idea that every point on a globe is always at an equal distance from its center, whatever its distance from other points. This was an analogy for truthful and harmonious statements, and is reasserted later in the *Fama*.

Things that agree are in right proportion both to one another and to their source or center. One thinks of the geomystic, Hermetic-style axiom: *God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere, circumference nowhere*, attributed to Nicholas of Cusa, among other late-medieval philosophers. The same idea appears in eighteenth-century Freemasonry as the injunction: "At the center of the circle, the master mason cannot err." The globe was and is a staple symbol of harmony in three dimensions, as the circle is a symbol of perfection in two. The genesis of both is the point in the first dimension.

Therefore, the *Axiomata* of C.R. will order all things and set knowledge on secure, not doubtful, foundations, because they have, literally, "got the point." Following this hopeful instruction, we have the first explicitly apocalyptic element in the *Fama*, probably derived from the thoughts of Tobias Hess, yet tactfully subsumed and rendered somewhat ambivalent in a scientific context.

The root of the idea of painful childbirth as a parable for the delivery of God's will ("great Commotions, labouring to be delivered of them") is to be found in the second apocryphal book of Esdras (included in the Roman Catholic canon): "Go thy way to a woman with child, and ask of her when she hath fulfilled her nine months, if her womb may keep the birth any longer within her" (2 Esd. 4:40).

The image of childbirth occurs throughout this potent scriptural text of apocalyptic vision and symbol, and the theme of painful labor (along with the images of the eagle and the victorious lion) are inseparable from the first messages of the invisible brotherhood. However, it is important to note that the *Fama*, in this instance, applies the image to the appearance of great men (the first reformers of art, science, and religion) who would have to struggle from the darkness of the grave into which the old learning had led, leaving Andreae's generation to take up the torch.

The image of the grave comes from 2 Esdras 4:41–42, but the presentation of the theme in this passage equates the great men's work with the new star of 1604 in the fiery trigon (*in trigono igneo*). The author is saying that by

now (the first decade of the seventeenth century), the light from their labors (undertaken in the previous two centuries) should be even brighter, as men set to work to build on their accomplishments.

There is ambivalence here—an Andreaean characteristic. The "sign" of 1604 surely must initiate something that will lead to the "Last Light" or final outpouring of divine revelation before the "end," or resolution of God's purposes for humanity on earth. The ambivalence comes in the issue of whether the light initiated by the commotions of the great men has, in fact, increased; Andreae is doubtful.

Thus the 1604 sign is taken as a wake-up call more than as a certain or unambiguous sign of the end. This passage shows that the Kepler- Röslin and Hess/Studion-Tübingen debates made a great impression on the author. Furthermore, the passage may also demonstrate that moderation of Hess's opinion that Andreae says (in *Tobiae Hessi*) he and his friends were able to secure in Hess after he was shown the shortcomings of Studion's temporal and supratemporal analysis. A second spiritual and scientific reformation was possible, but not inevitable. How might such a necessary wonder become at least probable?

Andreae posits the farsighted idea that there ought to be a "Society" in Europe capable of supplying just rulers with the financial necessaries of sound government, and that those fit to govern should be advised and properly educated by the Society. This idea goes back at least to Roger Bacon, who compared the value of a truly wise magus to his king with the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander the Great.

John Dee also desired to hold such a role, but few monarchs fancied the idea of such intelligent and authoritative advice. Those in authority like to hear what suits their moods, plans, or expectations. That, of course, was the observation that led to Andreae's hint of a solution: wise, nonpartisan experts, not "favorites" and party-men, in government.

Andreae's idea of a society in Europe dedicated to the cause of perpetual reformation and improvement would have long-range effects in European history. The conception of a wise and loving ("liberal" in the proper sense) theocracy will become a key feature of later Rosicrucian traditions, particularly marked in the ideal schemes of Louis Claude de St.- Martin (1743–1803) and his followers to this day.

The kernel of this idea was picked up by Adam Haslmayr in a letter to the archduke Maximilian of the Tyrol in 1612. Haslmayr claimed that he could, if permitted, find from the Rose Cross fraternity a sound and superior adviser who would make the prince yet more wise, wealthy, and successful. It would appear that the archduke found the notion of being advised by a brother of an order for whose existence he had only the already suspect Haslmayr's word utterly worthless, if not offensive and ludicrous.

It would take half a century before King Charles II of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland became patron of the considerably less ambitious Royal Society, the nonetheless pioneering scientific society whose foundation was inspired by men who had themselves been inspired by the *Fama Fraternitatis* and its complex creative outflow.

> Such a one likewise hath Theophrastus [Paracelsus] been in Vocation and Callings, although he was none of our Fraternity, yet nevertheless hath he diligently read over the Book M: whereby his sharp *ingenium* was exalted; but this man was also hindered in his course by the multitude of the learned and wise-seeming men, that he was never able peaceably to confer with others of his Knowledge and Understanding he had of Nature. And therefore in his writing he rather mocked these busybodies, and doth not show them altogether what he was: yet nevertheless there is found with him well grounded the aforenamed *Harmonia*, which without doubt he had imparted to the Learned, if he had not found them rather worthy of subtle vexation, then to be instructed in greater Arts and Sciences; he then with a free and careless life lost his time, and left unto the World their foolish pleasures.

The *Fama* has been described as the "gospel according to Paracelsus." As if in anticipation of this view, the *Fama* tells us that Paracelsus himself was not a member of the fraternity (certainly true!).

Paracelsus (born Theophrastus von Hohenheim) was a one-off gift to the world, though we are then informed, rather cheekily (one can see the twinkle in Andreae's warm eyes), that C.R's *Book M* did nonetheless spark off Paracelsus's creative genius. This would have been a significant tease to anyone taking the *Fama* literally.

There is, of course, a pleasant double meaning, in that if we take the *Book M* to mean the *liber mundi* or book of the world, then there is no doubt that consulting it did give Paracelsus a spur to his thoughts! Indeed, the whole phraseology of “Book of the Universe” or “Book of Nature”—God’s other scriptural revelations—was Paracelsus’s anyway. This is merely an illustration of the axiom that what was true for C.R. must be true for Paracelsus, and vice versa. Though fictional, the statement is true.

Andreae then gives us his personal opinion of Paracelsus. According to Andreae, the poor man was misjudged due to the fiery character of his personality in contact with the idiocy of those who automatically opposed him. Being constantly frustrated by lesser minds and interfering jacks, he was bound to express himself roughly at times. There is, for example, Paracelsus’s famous statement that if a physician was not also a hands-on surgeon, then he was no more than a “painted monkey”! This covered most of the senior medical profession.

In spite of magnificent cures that saved both the famous and the humble, Paracelsus was dogged all his short life by the scotoma that obstructed his vision of the gaudy apes who were his contemporaries but not his peers.

Andreae had had plenty of opportunity to observe this psychological scotoma at close quarters in Tübingen and its effects on both himself and his dear friend Hess. How to remove this obstruction was, as we shall see, a principal drive in the thought and imagery of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, as valid today as the day it was written.

> But that we do not forget our loving Father, Brother C.R. he after many painful Travels, and his fruitless true Instructions, returned again into Germany, the which he (by reason of the alterations which were shortly to come, and of the strange and dangerous contentions) heartily loved: There, although he could have bragged with his Art, but specially of the transmutations of Metals; yet did he esteem more Heaven, and the Citizens thereof, Man, then all vain glory and pomp.
>
> Nevertheless he built a fitting and neat inhabitation, in which he ruminated his Voyage, and Philosophy, and reduced them together in a true Memorial. In this house he spent a great time in the Mathematics, and made many fine Instruments, *ex omnibus hujus artis partibus*,

whereof there is but little remaining to us, as hereafter you shall understand. After five years came again into his mind the wished for Reformation; and in regard he doubted of the aid and help of others, although he himself was painstaking lusty, and unwearisome, he undertook, with some few adjoined with him, to attempt the same: wherefore he desired to that end, to have out of his first Cloister (to the which he bare a great affection) three of his Brethren, Brother G. V. Brother J. A. and Brother J. O. who besides that, they had some more knowledge in the Arts, then at that time many others had, he did bind those three unto himself, to be faithful, diligent, and secret; as also to commit carefully to writing, all that which he should direct and instruct them in, to the end that those which were to come, and through especial Revelation should be received into this Fraternity, might not be deceived of the least syllable and word.

After this manner began the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross; first, by four persons only, and by them was made the Magical Language and writing, with a large Dictionary, which we yet daily use to Gods praise and glory, and do find great wisdom therein; they made also the first part of the Book M: but in respect that the labour was too heavy, and the unspeakable concourse of the sick hindered them, and also whilst his new building (called *Sancti spiritus*) was now finished, they concluded to draw and receive yet others more into their Fraternity; to this end was chosen brother R.C. his deceased fathers brothers son, brother B. a skilful Painter, G. and P.D. their Secretary, all Germans except J.A. so in all they were eight in number, all bachelors and of vowed virginity, by those was collected a book or volume of all that which man can desire, wish, or hope for.

Concern with the “magical language” was of great interest to the science of the time. The idea goes back to the book of Genesis (2:19) when Adam, in his purity and innocence, named the animals and every living thing. Naming was not simply a matter of classifying, but the means of *calling forth* their precise essence or identity. Knowing their true names, the creatures could respond to Adam.

We all know the “magic” of a good memory for names. I have seen a

skilled salesman charm a roomful of different people week after week just by a keen memory. However, the idea we are seeking here is profound, not superficial: If you knew the original name of a thing, then you would have the power to summon its essence.

When the "authentic *nous*" (or "sovereign mind," called Poimandres) in the first book of the Hermetic philosophical *Corpus* appears in his boundless magnitude to the vision of Hermes Trismegistus, we are told that the power "called me [Hermes] by my name." The authentic *nous* (divine Mind) knew Hermes' essential, deepest nature. Exactly the same words are used in the *Fama* when C.R. first meets the wise men of Damcar. The wise men not only knew he was coming; they called him by his name.

The Genesis myth of the Tower of Babel suggested that after God divided the people gathered on the plain of Shinar into nations unable to communicate with one another, the original language was lost. Locating the original language was a vital theme of the Rosicrucian mythology.

There is no doubt that a number of scholars in the sixteenth century believed that Hebrew, especially with the tools of Kabbalah or mystical interpretation, provided an original divine language through which God had made the universe. Thus, many books of magic—and science—venerated to the point of preference and obscurity the Hebrew transliteration of words. God delivered special messages through the letters of Hebrew and, importantly, their numerical equivalents.

There were other aspects to this interest in a magical or effective language. John Dee, for example, obtained a new language through the mediumship of his assistant, alchemist and opportunist Edward Kelley. That language (which has its own grammar and syntax) was called Enochian, and it is still spoken by adepts today. Enoch, of course, was the patriarchal prophet who went to God before he died. Enochian was the language, Dee believed, by which angels communicated.

Meanwhile, in Sweden, at the time the *Fama* was composed, royal archivist (and later pro-Rosicrucian) Johannes Bureus was busy trying to prove that the runes of Scandinavia were relics of the original language lost to the East after the Flood but preserved in the North—which apparently escaped the Deluge—by the Hyperborean peoples, who had, Bureus believed, special mystical powers.

Bureus saw the runes as hieroglyphics and the root of the ancient Egyptian language. He also related the runes to the elements of geometry; geometry was also seen as a magical language. In creating the universe, Plato believed the maker or demiurge used five geometrical solids as archetypes or fundamental form-generators. Here also was a magical language that resided in the hidden heart of human beings (or what we might now call the "collective unconscious," following the gnostic Jung).

On a similar theme, John Dee was fascinated by the idea of being able to decode the universe by a system of divinely revealed signs. This led him naturally into murkier waters of demonic magic, which he regarded as a perversion of something once mighty and ancient. His "hieroglyphic monad" of 1564 (which appears on Christian Rosenkreuz's invitation to the alchemical wedding) was thought to encode both profound knowledge of nature and the talismanic power to affect the universe magically. Similar ideas may be found in the works of Dee's contemporary Giordano Bruno, whom we encountered earlier with his thirty images, signs, seals, statues, and heads.

Talismanic magic was a significant feature of the Sabian *Picatrix*, which Andreae had certainly read. Paracelsus had further dignified the concept of a scientifically valid magical language by writing of the "divine signatures" to be found in nature, written "with the finger of God," and by which channels could be reopened between nature and the divine light and source of health that poured through the cosmos, distributed in the elements.

We are today very familiar with the idea of composite formulas, the most famous being $E = mc^2$, a kind of talisman of modern science that attracts the attention as a statement of solid, high science. Dee, if he came to visit us, would recognize Einstein's formula as a magical hieroglyph: a sign by which God speaks to us through the real language of nature—numbers and letters combined in potent union.

The *Fama* declares that all this searching has been reduced to a harmonious system by C.R. in his habitation, called "Holy Spirit."

Now, here, astute readers will observe the presence of spiritual allegory, the implications of which we shall explore in due course. The reference to C.R.'s building derives from 2 Corinthians 5:1–5:

> For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

This passage would become of great significance in the symbolic world of Freemasonry. It was also of signal interest to radical spiritual reformers such as Weigel, Franck, Paracelsus (after his death), and Schwenckfeld, who mistrusted the material church of wood and stone and looked to the *Ecclesia spiritualis*, built of stones of living fire on divine foundations.

Meanwhile, as C.R. Is becoming spiritually integrated and perfected from within, the hordes of sick hinder the work, a fact of life that Christ himself had to deal with if the Gospel accounts are to be believed; the sick come naturally to the source of healing. We should not forget that C.R. Brought not only restored *Axiomata* of theoretical science but also the science and gift of healing, a happy by-product of spiritual and rational progress.

> Although we do now freely confess, that the World is much amended within an hundred years, yet we are assured, that our *Axiomata* shall unmovably remain unto the Worlds End, and also the world in her highest and last Age shall not attain to see any thing else; for our *Rota* takes her beginning from that day when God spake *Fiat* [Let it be], and shall end when he shall speak *Pereat* [pass away]; yet God's Clock striketh every minute, where ours scarce striketh perfect hours. We also steadfastly believe, that if our Brethren and Fathers had lived in this our present and clear light, they would more roughly have handled the Pope, Mahomet, Scribes, Artists, and Sophists, and had showed themselves more helpful, not simply with sighs, and wishing of their end and consummation.
>
> When now these eight Brethren had disposed and ordered all things in such manner, as there was not now need of any great labour, and also that every one was sufficiently instructed, and able perfectly to discourse of

secret and manifest Philosophy, they would not remain any longer together, but as in the beginning they had agreed, they separated themselves into several Countries, because that not only their *Axiomata* might in secret be more profoundly examined by the learned, but that they themselves, if in some Country or other they observed anything, or perceived some Error, they might inform one another of it.

Their agreement was this: First, That none of them should profess any other thing, than to cure the sick, and that *gratis*. 2. None of the Posterity should be constrained to wear one certain kind of habit, but therein to follow the custom of the Country. 3. That every year upon the day C. they should meet together at the house *S. Spiritus*, or to write the cause of his absence. 4. Every Brother should look out for a worthy person, who after his decease might succeed him. 5. The word C.R. should be their Seal, Mark, and Character. 6. The Fraternity should remain secret one hundred years. These six Articles they bound themselves one to another to keep; and five of the Brethren departed, only the Brethren B. and D. remained with the Father *Fra: R.C.* a whole year; when these likewise departed, then remained by him his Cousin and Brother J.O. so that he hath all the days of his life with him two of his Brethren. And although that as yet the Church was not cleansed, nevertheless we know that they did think of her, and with what longing desire they looked for: Every year they assembled together with joy, and made a full resolution of that which they had done; there must certainly have been great pleasure, to hear truly and without invention related and rehearsed all the Wonders which God hath poured out here and there through the World. Every one may hold it out for certain, that such persons as were sent, and joined together by God, and the Heavens, and chosen out of the wisest of men, as have lived in many Ages, did live together above all others in highest Unity, greatest Secrecy, and most kindness one towards another.

After such a most laudable sort they did spend their lives; and although they were free from all diseases and pain, yet notwithstanding they could not live and pass their time appointed of God. The first of this Fraternity which died, and that in England, was J.O. as Brother C. long before had foretold him; he was very expert, and well learned in Cabala, as his Book called H. witnesseth: In England he is much spoken of, and chiefly

because he cured a young Earl of Norfolk of the Leprosy. They had concluded, that as much as possibly could be their burial place should be kept secret, as at this day it is not known unto us what is become of some of them, yet everyone's place was supplied with a fit successor; but this we will confess publicly by these presents to the honour of God, That what secret soever we have learned out of the book M. (although before our eyes we behold the image and pattern of all the world) yet are there not shown unto us our misfortunes, nor hour of death, the which only is known to God himself, who thereby would have us keep in a continual readiness; but hereof more in our *Confession*, where we do set down 37 Reasons wherefore we now do make known our Fraternity, and proffer such high Mysteries freely, and without constraint and reward: also we do promise more gold than both the Indies bring to the King of Spain; for Europe is with child and will bring forth a strong child, who shall stand in need of a great godfather's gift.

After the death of I.O. Brother R.C. rested not, but as soon as he could, called the rest together, (and as we suppose) then his grave was made; although hitherto we (who were the latest) did not know when our loving father R.C. died, and had no more but the bare names of the beginners, and all their successors to us; yet there came into our memory, a secret, which through dark and hidden words, and speeches of the 100 years, brother A. the successor of D. (who was of the last and second row and succession, and had lived amongst many of us,) did impart unto us of the third row and succession; otherwise we must confess, that after the death of the said A. none of us had in any manner known anything of Brother R.C. and of his first fellowbrethren, then that which was extant of them in our Philosophical *Bibliotheca*, amongst which our *Axiomata* was held for the chiefest, *Rota Mundi*, for the most artificial, and *Proteus* the most profitable. Likewise we do not certainly know if these of the second row have been of the like wisdom as the first, and if they were admitted to all things. It shall be declared hereafter to the gentle Reader, not only what we have heard of the burial of R.C. but also made manifest publicly by the foresight, sufferance and commandment of God, whom we most faithfully obey, that if we shall be answered discreetly and Christian-like, we will not be afraid to set forth publicly in Print, our names, and

> surnames, our meetings, or any thing else that may be required at our hands.

It should be clearly understood, the fraternity tells the reader, that C.R. obtained infallible axioms in the form of a divine mathematics whose formulas could penetrate the arcana of nature, thus opening the universe to enlightened purview.

The *rotae mundi* (wheels of the world) employed by the fraternity is a system derived from C.R.'s divine mathematics. It was not only Hess who was fascinated by wheels and technology. Andreae himself, in his remarkable book on mathematics, architecture, and technology, *Collectaneorum mathematicorum decades XI* (A book of ten mathematical collections XI; Tübingen, 1614), refers to his rotary astrolabe and includes a sketch for an astronomical roulette to determine the relation of the phases of the moon to the zodiac. In 1643 he would make a sketch of a circular cryptographic system called an *Alphabetum in infinitum transformandum* (an alphabet transformed into infinity, an ancestor of the famous Enigma coding and decoding machine); and not long before his death in 1654, he would present his patron August of Braunschweig with a truly wonderful multifunctional clock, the *Calendarium mobile perpetuum* (perpetually moving calendar), constructed by Hans Buschmann of Augsburg from sketches by Andreae.

In the *Fama* we see the imaginative and ideal genesis of these interests. There is also a link with the vision of Ezekiel (1:15–16), who is granted sight of the hidden wheels of God's will and cosmic design in which the wheel signifies both revelation and revolution. Knowledge of the creation is a way of apprehending the divinity, a way of mounting Jacob's ladder. So we should not be surprised to find that the third secret work dear to the fraternity is called *Proteus*. Proteus, god of the sea and "prophet of Egypt" in Homer's *Odyssey*, possesses both the power of metamorphosis and the gift of vision, gifts also associated with Hermes.

> Now the true and fundamental relation of the finding out of the high illuminated man of God, Fra: C.R.C. is this; After that A. in *Gallia Narbonensis* [the old Roman province encompassing Languedoc, Narbonne, and Provence] was deceased, then succeeded in his place, our

> loving Brother N.N. this man after he had repaired unto us to take the solemn oath of fidelity and secrecy, he informed us *bona fide*, That A. had comforted him in telling him, that this Fraternity should ere long not remain so hidden, but should be to all the whole German Nation helpful, needful, and commendable; of the which he was not in any wise in his estate ashamed of. The year following after he had performed his School right, and was minded now to travel, being for that purpose sufficiently provided with *Fortunatus*' purse, he thought (he being a good Architect) to alter something of his building, and to make it more fit: in such renewing he lighted upon the memorial Table which was cast of brass, and containeth all the names of the brethren, with some few other things; this he would transfer in another more fitting vault: for where or when *Fra: R.C.* died, or in what country he was buried, was by our predecessors concealed and unknown unto us. In this Table stuck a great nail somewhat strong, so that when he was with force drawn out, he took with him an indifferent big stone out of the thin wall, or plastering of the hidden door, and so unlooked for uncovered the door; wherefore we did with joy and longing throw down the rest of the wall, and cleared the door, upon which that was written in great letters, *Post 120 annos patebo*, [After 120 years I will be open] with the year of the Lord under it: therefore we gave God thanks and let it rest that same night, because first we would overlook our *Rotam*; but we refer our selves again to the confession, for what we here publish is done for the help of those that are worthy, but to the unworthy (God willing) it will be small profit: For like as our door was after so many years wonderfully discovered, also there shall be opened a door to Europe (when the wall is removed) which already doth begin to appear, and with great desire is expected of many.

The account is plainly intended to be allegorical, as is shown by those last lines. It is the door that is to be opened to Europe that is of greatest significance. The idea is that Europe is shut in, imprisoned in its own blindness and ignorance—the scotoma that inhibits vision spoken of earlier. In the next chapter we shall explore precisely what Andreae was getting at when using this imagery of the nail and the blockage to vision, and on what particular source it may have depended for its inspiration.

The reference to 120 years having passed since the founder of the fraternity's burial is not accidental. Tobias Hess was familiar with Giacomo Brocardo's *Mystica et prophetica libri Geneseos interpretatio* (The mystical and prophetical interpretation of the book of Genesis; Bremen, Theodor Gluichstein, 1585). Brocardo saw the date of Luther's birth (November 1483) as the starting point for the last age. The age would last 120 years.

Incidentally, Abu Ma'shar (whose work was, of course, consulted by Brocardo) made a prediction that at a conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars in Scorpio, a prophet would appear who would supersede the prophet of Islam. These planets met in 1484, shortly after Luther's birth, and this was considered to add force to the 120-year theory. The number 120 was taken from Genesis 6:3: "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

The 1607 "breeches" (or Geneva) English Bible supplies the note that 120 years was the term given by God in which time humankind could repent, before God destroyed the earth. A textual reference to 1 Peter 3:20 was offered as support. The text refers to the Deluge from which the righteous Noah was saved. The figure of 120 is also pertinent to Simon Studion's second version of the *Naometria*, which draws attention to the supernova of 1572. On the manuscript's last plate may be seen a wheel of the heavens on which comets are tracked. The wheel is made up of seven candelabra, seven swords, and two pyramids.

The well-known archivist of alchemical works Adam McClean (*A Compendium on the Rosicrucian Vault*; Edinburgh, 1986) considered this wheel and observed that the candelabra (representing the seven angelic ages on the Sabian pattern) have forty nodes in sixteen levels. Each level measures an interval of 120 years. The swords, on the other hand, have only sixteen nodes, but the same number of levels as the candelabra. The result is a complex chronology of years. Included in the design are the seven planets, seven churches, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve disciples, and the twelve precious stones and two cornerstones on which will be founded the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24).

Mercifully, Andreae has spared his readers Studion's complex numerology and given us the hint of a mysterious number and the foreknowledge of *frater*

C.R. One hundred twenty complete years from Luther's birth in November 1483 brings us to the end of 1603, when Kepler first observed the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter that would become a triple conjunction in 1604, crowned by the appearance of the supernova in Serpentarius in the October of that year. More simply, since the later *Confessio Fraternitatis* (referred to in the text above) tells us that C.R. was born in 1378 (when the Great Schism of the Catholic Church saw two popes in rivalry with each other) and lived until he was 106 (dying in 1484), then 120 years gives us the signal date of 1604 for the revelation of C.R.'s "compendium of the universe" that will open a door to Europe.

This was what Europe had been longing for! Here was the fulfillment of a hope nourished in good people's hearts ever since the scandal of a dual papacy had revealed once and for all, and for all to see, the inherent corruption of the old church.

> In the morning following we opened the door, and there appeared to our sight a Vault of seven sides and corners, every side five foot broad, and the height of eight foot; Although the Sun never shone in this Vault, nevertheless it was enlightened with another sun, which had learned this from the Sun, and was situated in the upper part in the Centre of the ceiling; in the midst, in stead of a Tomb-stone, was a round Altar covered over with a plate of brass, and thereon this engraven:
>
> *A.C. R.C. Hoc universi compendium vivus mihi sepulchrum feci*. [This compendium of the universe I made in my lifetime to be my tomb.]
>
> Round about the first Circle or Brim stood,
>
> *Jesus mihi omnia*. [Jesus, everything to me]
>
> In the middle were four figures, inclosed in circles, whose circumscription was,
>
> 1. *Nequaquam vacuum*. [a vacuum exists nowhere.]
> 2. *Legis Jugum*. [The Yoke of the Law.]

3. *Libertas Evangelii*. [The Liberty of the Gospel.]
4. *Dei gloria intacta*. [The whole glory of God.]

This is all clear and bright, as also the seventh side and the two *Heptagoni*: so we kneeled altogether down, and gave thanks to the sole wise, sole mighty, and sole eternal God, who hath taught us more than all men's wit could have found out, praised be his holy name.

This Vault we parted in three parts, the upper part or ceiling, the wall or side, the ground or floor.

Of the upper part you shall understand no more of it at this time, but that it was divided into triangles running from the seven sides to the bright light in the centre; but what therein is contained, you shall God willing (that are desirous of our society) behold the same with your own eyes; but every side or wall is parted into ten squares, every one with their several figures and sentences, as they are truly shown, and set forth *Concentratum* here in our book.

The floor is again divided into triangles, but because therein is described the power and rule of the inferior Governors [the stars], we leave to manifest the same, for fear of the abuse by the evil and ungodly world. But those that are provided and stored with the heavenly Antidote, they do without fear or hurt, tread on, and bruise the head of the old and evil serpent, which this our age is well fitted for: every side or wall had a door for a chest, wherein there lay diverse things, especially all our books, which otherwise we had, besides the *Vocabular* of Theoph: Par. Ho. [Theophrastus Paracelsus ab Hohenheim] And which we daily communicate unfalsified. Herein also we found his *Itinerarium*, and *vitam*, whence this relation for the most part is taken. In another chest were looking-glasses of divers virtues, as also in other places were little bells, burning lamps, & chiefly wonderful artificial Songs; generally all done to that end, that if it should happen after many hundred years, the Order or Fraternity should come to nothing, they might by this only Vault be restored again.

For those taking the story literally, there is in the text above a glaring and probably deliberate error. Since Paracelsus was not born until 1493 and the tomb was sealed in 1484, there could hardly be any works of Paracelsus stored within it!

> Now as yet we had not seen the dead body of our careful and wise father, we therefore removed the Altar aside, there we lifted up a strong plate of brass, and found a fair and worthy body, whole and unconsumed, as the same is here lively counterfeited, with all the Ornaments and Attires; in his hand he held a parchment book, called I. the which next to the Bible, is our greatest treasure, which ought to be delivered to the censure of the world. At the end of this book standeth this following *Elogium*.
>
> *Granum pectori Jesu insitum.*
>
> *C. Ros. C. ex nobili atque splendida Germaniae R.C. familia oriundus, vir sui seculi divinis revelationibus subtilissimis imaginationibus, indefessis laboribus ad coelestia, atque humana mysteria ; arcanave admissus postquam suam (quam Arabico, & Africano itineribus Collegerat) plusquam regiam, atque imperatoriam Gazam suo seculo nondum convenientem, posteritati eruendam custo divisset et jam suarum Artium, ut et nominis, fides acconjunctissimos herides instituisset, mundum minutum omnibus motibus magno illi respondentem fabricasset hocque tandem preteritarum, praesentium, et futurarum, rerum compendio extracto, centenario major non morbo (quem ipse nunquam corpore expertus erat, nunquam alios infestare sinebat) ullo pellente sed spiritu Dei evocante, illuminatam animam (inter Fratrum amplexus et ultima oscula) fidelissimo creatori Deo reddidisset, Pater dilectissimus, Fra: suavissimus, praeceptor fidelissimus amicus integerimus, a suis ad 120 annos hic absconditus est.*
>
> [Translation: A grain buried in the breast of Jesus, C. Ros. C., sprung from the noble and renowned German family of R.C; a man admitted into the mysteries and secrets of heaven and earth through the divine revelations, subtle cogitations and unwearied toil of his life. In his journeys through Arabia and Africa he collected a treasure surpassing

that of Kings and Emperors; but finding it not suitable for his times, he kept it guarded for posterity to uncover, and appointed loyal and faithful heirs of his arts and also of his name. He constructed a microcosm corresponding in all motions to the macrocosm and finally drew up this compendium of things past, present and to come. Then, having now passed the century of years, though oppressed by no disease, which he had neither felt in his own body nor allowed to attack others, but summoned by the Spirit of God, amid the last embraces of his brethren he rendered up his illuminated soul to God his Creator. A beloved Father, an affectionate Brother, a faithful Teacher, a loyal Friend, he was hidden here by his disciples for 120 years.]

Underneath they had subscribed themselves,

1. Fra: I.A. Fr.C.H. *electione Fraternitatis caput*. [by the choice of Fr.C.H., head of the Fraternity]
2. Fr: G.V. M.P.C.
3. Fra: R.C. *Iunior haeres S. Spiritus*.
4. Fra: B.M. P.A. *Pictor et Architectus*.
5. Fr: G.G. M.P.I. *Cabalista*.

Secundi Circuli.

1. Fra: P.A. *Successor*, Fr: I.O. *Mathematicus*.
2. Fra: A. *Successor*, Fra. P.D.
3. Fra: R. *Successor patris* C.R.C. *cum Christo Triumphantis*.

At the end was written:

Ex Deo Nascimur, in Jesu morimur, per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus. [We are born of God, we die in Jesus, we live again through the Holy Spirit.]

At that time was already dead Brother I.O. and Fra: D. but their burial

place where is it to be found? we doubt not but our Fra: Senior hath the same, and some especial thing laid in Earth, and perhaps likewise hidden: we also hope that this our Example will stir up others more diligently to enquire after their names (whom we have therefore published) and to search for the place of their burial; for the most part of them, by reason of their practice and physick, are yet known, and praised among very old folks; so might perhaps our Gaza be enlarged, or at least be better cleared.

Concerning *Minutum Mundum* [the small world], we found it kept in another little Altar, truly more finer than can be imagined by any understanding man; but we will leave him undescribed, untill we shall truly be answered upon this our true hearted *Famam*; and so we have covered it again with the plates, and set the altar thereon, shut the door, and made it sure, with all our seals; besides by instruction and command of our *Rota*, there are come to sight some books, among which is contained M. (which were made in stead of household care by the praise-worthy M.P.) Finally we departed the one from the other, and left the natural heirs in possession of our Jewels. And so we do expect the answer and judgment of the learned, or unlearned.

Howbeit we know after a time there will now be a general reformation, both of divine and humane things, according to our desire, and the expectation of others: for it is fitting, that before the rising of the Sun, there should appear and break forth *Aurora*, or some clearness, or divine light in the sky; and so in the mean time some few, which shall give their names, may join together, thereby to increase the number and respect of our Fraternity, and make a happy and wished for beginning of our Philosophical Canons, prescribed to us by our brother R.C. and be partakers with us of our treasures (which never can fail or be wasted) in all humility, and love to be eased of this worlds labour, and not walk so blindly in the knowledge of the wonderful works of God.

But that also every Christian may know of what Religion and belief we are, we confess to have the knowledge of Jesus Christ (as the same now in these last days, and chiefly in Germany, most clear and pure is professed, and is nowadays cleansed and void of all swerving people, Heretics, and false Prophets,) in certain and noted Countries maintained,

> defended and propagated: Also we use two Sacraments, as they are instituted with all Forms and Ceremonies of the first renewed [Lutheran] Church. In *Politia* we acknowledge the Roman Empire and *Quartam Monarchiam* [the Fourth Kingdom—a reference to the prophecies of Daniel] for our Christian head; albeit we know what alterations be at hand, and would fain impart the same with all our hearts, to other godly learned men; notwithstanding our hand-writing which is in our hands, no man (except God alone) can make it common, nor any unworthy person is able to bereave us of it. But we shall help with secret aid this so good a cause, as God shall permit or hinder us: For our God is not blind, as the Heathens' *Fortuna*, but is the Church's Ornament, and the honour of the Temple. Our Philosophy also is not a new Invention, but as Adam after his fall hath received it, and as Moses and Solomon used it: also she ought not much to be doubted of, or contradicted by other opinions, or meanings; but seeing the truth is peaceable, brief, and always like herself in all things, and especially accorded by with Jesus *in omni parte* and all members. And as he is the true Image of the Father, so is she his Image; It shall not be said, this is true according to Philosophy, but false as to Theology; And wherein Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras and others did hit the mark, and wherein Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Solomon did excel; but especially wherewith that wonderful book the Bible agreeth. All that same concurreth together, and make a Sphere or Globe, whose total parts are equidistant from the Centre, as hereof more at large and more plain shall be spoken of in Christianly Conference.

Andreae is careful to state that the philosophy of the fraternity is not new, but by giving it the pedigree he does, we may understand that it has been hidden for much of time, at least in its fullness. The reference to Adam, Moses, and Solomon puts the thinking well into the category of what has been called the "pristine theology" or classic gnostic pedigree: the original and authentic knowledge of God vouchsafed to Adam and the inspired patriarchs before the Flood and the tragedy of Babel.

Florentine philosophers such as Pico della Mirandola and Marsiglio Ficino believed that the fruit of this pristine theology had been restored to civilization with the arrival of the first four books of the *Corpus Hermeticum*

(the “bible” of the Sabians) in Florence in 1460.

Interestingly, there are two names that appear to be missing in Andreae’s itinerary. He puts the biblical characters in primary position (they “excelled”), whereas the well-known classical Greek masters only “hit the mark.” This reserve in treating the descent of wisdom in a manner that would not offend Lutheran tradition may explain why the names of Seth and Hermes are absent.

Hermes Trismegistus had been held to be a contemporary of Moses, although he was also identified with Enoch, which might explain his absence. The position of Seth as the progenitor of a wisdom tradition was known to the mystical tradition of the time, but nobody would have asserted that Seth knew things that Adam did not. Seth, Adam’s third son, took on the knowledge from his father, so by beginning with Adam, the Sethian tradition is implicit. The honor given to Moses and Solomon suggests the mythology of the Kabbalah concerning the secret meaning of the revelation received by Moses on Mount Horeb and passed on unwritten thereafter to the worthy.

However, there is a more interesting possibility that emerges from close attention to this passage on the fathers of the fraternity’s philosophy. We cannot help noticing the appearance of the globe or sphere as an epitome of truth and perfection. Another notable reference to the virtues of the sphere is to be found in the work of the French poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, whose *Devine Weekes and Workes* was published in English (translated by Jacobean poet Joshua Sylvester) in 1608.

> *See here the Solids: Cubes, Cylinders, Cones,*
> *Pyramids, Prisms, Dodecahedrons:*
> *And there the Sphere, which (World’s Type) comprehends*
> *Itself in itself; having neither midst nor ends:*

Such a sphere would seem to be the *minutum mundum* referred to earlier in the *Fama* and kept safely hidden in the tomb.

This detail might appear merely incidental were it not for another detail that appears in Andreae’s *Breviarium* (a short account of key events in his life prepared for the duke of Braunschweig and now in Wolfenbüttel). The entry for 1610 (when Andreae is supposed to have written the *Fama*) informs

us of his travels in France, Italy, and Spain, followed by a reference to studying carefully the poetry of Du Bartas, as directed by Christoph Besold. Does Du Bartas's work give us any other clues that might help us understand better the *Fama* by giving us an insight into its author's mind at the time it was composed?

Well, how about this distinctly Kabbalah-aware account of the transmission of the wisdom of the magi through time?

> *First under the Hebrew raised and born:*
> *In due time comes to the Chaldaeans by adoption:*
> *In due course scorning the Babylonian spires,*
> *It leaves swift Tigris and to the Nile retires;*
> *And waxing rich, in Egypt it erects*
> *A famous School; yet free to move,*
> *It falls in love with subtle Grecian wits,*
> *And so to their hands a while itself commits;*
> *But in renowned Ptolemy's reign,*
> *It doth revisit the dear Memphian Plain:*
> *Yet, thence fled again, it doth the Arabians try;*
> *From thence to Rome: From Rome to Germany.*

This could almost read as a basis for the adventurous itinerary of *frater C.R.* Even more interestingly, these verses come from a section of Du Bartas's work called *The Columns*. And *The Columns* deals in part with the craft legend of the old freemasons, as found in the earliest copies of the masons' *Old Charges*. (There is a final section to the poem, called "The Magnificence," that deals with both Solomon's Temple and the poet's astonished visit to the "new Solomon," King James VI of Scotland, traditionally accepted to have been an admitted Freemason.)

The Columns concerns Seth and his descendant Heber. Heber's son Phalec witnesses the division of humankind at Babel when the common language ended. However, in prophetic anticipation of disasters to come, Seth has left a legacy: two pillars, one of marble to survive flood and one of brick to survive fire. The pillars summarize the main principles of human knowledge, which,

in Du Bartas's version of the legend, includes the wonders of mathematics, astronomy, and the highly Platonic and Pythagorean geometry with which we began this excursus.

Can it be purely accidental that *frater C.R.*'s tomb is likewise intended to be a compendium of the universal knowledge that would survive the ravages of time, to be rediscovered when the world needed it most—when the keys to order the harmony of the universe had been lost?

C.R. internalized this knowledge so as to become a bridge between the microcosm and the macrocosm, between Earth (the small world) and the heavens. He is thus everything a true "pope" or "papa," that is, father of men, would have to be.

The attention of the *Fama* now turns to the vexed subject of alchemy, in which much confusion has arisen.

> But now concerning (and chiefly in this our age) the ungodly and accursed Gold-making, which hath gotten so much the upper hand, whereby under colour of it, many runagates and roguish people do use great villainies, and cozen and abuse the credit, which is given them: yea nowadays men of discretion do hold the transmutation of Metals to be the highest point, and *fastigium* in Philosophy, this is all their intent, and desire, and that God would be most esteemed by them, and honoured, which could make great store of Gold, and in abundance, the which with unpremeditate prayers, they hope to attain of the all-knowing God, and searcher of all hearts: we therefore do by these presents publicly testify, That the true Philosophers are far of another mind, esteeming little the making of Gold, which is but a *parergon* [or by-product, of the *ergon*, or Work]; for besides that they have a thousand better things.
>
> And we say with our loving Father R.C.C. Phy: *aureum nisi quantum aurum*, for unto them the whole nature is detected: he doth not rejoyce, that he can make Gold, and that, as saith Christ, the devils are obedient unto him; but is glad that he seeth the Heavens open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending, and his name written in the book of life. Also we do testifiy that under the name of *Chymia* many books and pictures are set forth in *Contumeliam gloriae Dei*, as we will name them in their due season, and will give to the purehearted a Catalogue, or

Register of them: And we pray all learned men to take heed of these kind of Books; for the enemy never resteth, but soweth his weeds, till a stronger one doth root it out. So according to the will and meaning of Fra: C.R.C. we his brethren request again all the learned in Europe, who shall read (sent forth in five languages) this our *Famam* and *Confessionem*, that it would please them with good deliberation to ponder this our offer, and to examine most nearly and most sharply their Arts, and behold the present time with all diligence, and to declare their mind, either Communicate *consilio*, or *singulatim* by Print.

And although at this time we make no mention either of our names, or meetings, yet nevertheless every ones opinion shall assuredly come to our hands, in what language so ever it be; nor any body shall fail, who so gives but his name to speak with some of us, either by word of mouth, or else if there be some left in writing. And this we say for a truth, That whosoever shall earnestly, and from his heart, bear affection unto us, it shall be beneficial to him in goods, body and soul; but he that is false-hearted, or only greedy of riches, the same first of all shall not be able in any manner of wise to hurt us, but bring him to utter ruin and destruction. Also our building (although one hundred thousand people had very near seen and beheld the same) shall for ever remain untouched, undestroyed, and hidden to the wicked world,

SUB UMBRA ALARUM TUARUM, JEHOVA
[under the shadow of your Wings, Jehovah]

The Brothers of the Fraternity R.C.

What an achievement! In a few pages of inspired creativity and transcendent cheek, Johann Valentin Andreae succeeded in condensing the entire debate about the meaning of the new star of 1604 into a play of his own making that would itself launch one of the greatest games in history.

He had made the new star his own, and many of the wise would follow it.

SIX

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. ADAM HASLMAYR

May the spirit of God, not go where it wants, or must he first consult the universities and bishops? All men may fully share in the grace of God and the school of the holy Apostle is as open as it was during Pentecost, only now it is lodged in the mind and in the truth, in asking, seeking and appealing, and not in the anointment of humans or the tonsure. . . . As Doctor Paracelsus Magnus explains, the mighty Cabalista.

ORATIO REUELATORIA, LETTER FROM ADAM HASLMAYR TO ARCHDUKE MAXIMILIAN OF AUSTRIA, 1612

It has been widely repeated by scholars of Rosicrucianism that the *Fama Fraternitatis* was distributed as a manuscript to interested parties, that being the intention of those behind it. We have absolutely no evidence that distribution was ever in fact intended. Nevertheless, such is, as we have seen, a natural presumption based on what occurred subsequently.

For example, we have seen Carl Widemann's assurance made to his patron Prince Augustus von Anhalt in 1612 that he might obtain the *Confessio Fraternitatis* from Tobias Hess in Tübingen. It does seem logical to suppose that if the *Confessio Fraternitatis* could come from Tübingen, then the *Fama* must have come from there as well.

Nevertheless, we cannot be entirely sure of either the mechanics or the intention behind the placing of the *Fama* in "foreign hands." That the fiction

of the *Fama* states that it is intended for all who share its aims and understand its spirit may only mean that the promised distribution may be a fiction as well.

There are other questions. Why, if the work was intended for distribution, did it manifest only as a manuscript? Copying manuscripts was and is extremely laborious; the printing press had long since removed the need for such toil—and the Reformation period needed no education in the matter of the power of the press. This was the golden era of the *Handschrift*, or pamphlet. If you wanted to communicate something quickly and relatively cheaply, you had the work printed. Admittedly, if the work was of a nonorthodox or heretical nature, you might have to travel a distance to find a willing printer, but they existed and were known well enough, bringing with them networks of interested customers. Without the daring printers, there could never have been a systematic reformation of the kind that had shaken the previous century to its roots.

These questions are not simply academic. To understand what happened and why different people reacted to the *Fama* in the ways they did, it is important to know what the author or authors thought they were actually doing. Too much has been taken for granted.

Now, we do know that Andreae would later describe what he knew was a fiction as a "game" ("a *ludibrium* for the curious," *Menippus*, 1617), but that does not truly reveal what the original idea was. If the "game" was simply to bring alchemists, magicians, cabalists, technologists, astronomers, and other worthy men of science out of the woodwork to challenge prevailing tendencies of academic restriction and religious repression, then surely the thing to do would have been to get the *Fama* printed as soon as possible. If Hess was, as seems likely, involved in some kind of distribution—however limited—was he trying to jump-start the golden age? Or, conversely, could it be that Andreae's intitial intention was to "take the mickey" out of the apocalyptic optimists, using a satire to set the cat among the pigeons? Did he then turn against it once the cat had gotten out of the bag? That these two widely divergent possibilities may be entertained should give us pause.

Roland Edighoffer has referred to the "ambivalence" of Andreae. Any person who has read Andreae's works should be able to testify to this quality inherent in his creative genius. Above all, like a good teacher, Andreae wants

you to think for yourself. His writing is allusive, his personal point of view often elusive.

There is no doubt that the concept of an invisible brotherhood would have pleased him: a work of pure imagination—something that could not be destroyed; a secret brotherhood whose ringleader could not be burned because he was already dead; whose work was subtle, spiritual, engaged with the invisible microcosm that the blind world did not, could not, and would not see.

There were other, more practical grounds for embracing the power of the invisible. It has to be said that the Inquisition was not far away from Württemberg. There was even a Jesuit college at Dillingen, close to Tübingen (which Andreae visited).

The year Andreae almost certainly wrote the *Fama*, Galileo's epochmarking *Sidereus nuncius* (Starry messenger) was published in Venice, bringing the stars even closer to humankind through the wonder of the telescope. The appearance of the two works in the same year is itself an intriguing coincidence. (Only the previous year, Kepler's equally significant *Astronomia nova* [New Astronomy] broke the age-old Ptolemaic vision of circular planetary movement and showed the elliptical paths taken by the planets.)

From 1611, secret information was laid against Galileo by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Cardinal Maffeo Bellarmine, an intellectual, received annual reports on Galileo that would lead to his trial in 1633. The mills of the Inquisition ground slow, but you could hear them at a distance. Andreae traveled in Italy in 1610; if he wished to travel there unhindered in future, he would need to keep his name clear of printed controversy.

The idea springs up that the author's intention was not necessarily secure in his own mind. Imagine writing something you knew in your heart had explosive potential, but you were not really ready for it. It had come through you, but you did not feel entirely responsible for it. Suppose the work was an annoyance, but you were fascinated nonetheless. You show it to a friend who seizes the point, without the internal scruples of the scribe.

Conversely, having accepted the work in your own mind, you wish to exercise some control over how the "game" is managed. You would, I think, feel the need for some kind of network, but we have no real evidence for such

a network being employed by Andreae with respect to the Fama. Besides, even if we posit a combination of networks of, say, Andreae's contacts and/or Hess's contacts (they were widely distributed across Europe), what would be the point of preaching to the converted? Was the work intended to be taken allegorically, or literally? If the latter, then it was a hoax or stunt; if the former, its purpose must have been inspirational. Neither interpretation quite fits the idea of a "game for the curious." Who was going to win?

It might be that there was a covert strategy that has remained so to this day. After all, if there were no genuine mystery regarding the *Fama*, you would probably not be reading this, and I should probably not have written it!

Perhaps all we can do is observe the points at which such a strategy might have appeared at the surface. Alternatively, we can apply Occam's razor and deal with the facts as we know them.

Fact One: The first person known to have responded to the *Fama Fraternitatis* was Adam Haslmayr, born in Bolzano, south Tyrol, ca. 1560 (d. Augsburg, 1630).

Fact Two: The first person outside Tübingen known to have received a copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis* was this same Adam Haslmayr.

Fact Three: Only a handful of manuscript versions of the *Fama Fraternitatis* have survived.

Fact Four: All the manuscript versions are in different handwritings.

Deduction One: People who received a copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis* made their own copies and then (as was perhaps the intended idea) passed the copy on, either as a gift or as a response to a request. This would keep the transmission process exclusive, in keeping with the peculiar style of address employed in the *Fama*, laden as it was with discretionary secrecy.

Deduction Two: Whoever initiated the passing-on movement saw value—perhaps experimental value—in the idea of dropping a pebble into a pool. Such a tiny beginning would have relatively open, possibly creative consequences but remain within the terms of a game.

Deduction Three: Since Adam Haslmayr first saw a copy of the *Fama* in 1610, he must have been relatively close to the fount of the supply

chain.

Deduction Four: Since Haslmayr's interests were so much more in line with those of Tobias Hess (being a convinced Paracelsian doctor), then it is most likely that the connection came through Hess's contacts.

Had Andreae wished to exercise some kind of control over the game, then the case of Haslmayr would demonstrate immediately that such control was impossible; Andreae would have no choice but to watch the drama unfold. That was certainly the stance he took four years later when the *Fama* was published.

While on the one hand it could be argued that Haslmayr's response (*Antwort*, printed in 1612) was a phenomenally powerful endorsement of the message of the *Fama*; on the other, its writer's passionate extremism would almost certainly have disturbed Andreae. That is to say, in the hands of Haslmayr, the *Fama* very soon became a recruiting tract for what was, in fact, a kind of new religion, based on the apocalyptic expectation of an imminent acquisition of breathtakingly new scientific knowledge—predicted by both Paracelsus and Christian scripture.

Antwort

An die lobwürdige Brü-

derschafft der Theosophē von Rosen Creutz

N. N vom Adam Haßlmayr Archiducalem Alum-

num, Notarium seu Iudicem ordinarium Cæ-

sareum, der zeyten zum heyligen Creutz

Döflem bey Hall in Tyroll

wohnende.

Ad Famam Fraternitatis Einfeltig

gißgeantwortet. Anno 1612.

Getruckt im Jar/Anno: 612.

The only known copy of Adam Haslmayr's printed *Antwort* to the *Fama* (1612), discovered by Carlos Gilly at the Herzogin Anna-Amalia-Bibliothek, Weimar. Courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.

While the idea of the Fama's being taken literally would undoubtedly have

been the cause of ribald laughter in the face of Andreae the humorist and theatrical game-player, it would certainly come to trouble Andreae the theologian.

Furthermore, the consequences of taking the Fama literally could, as we are about to see, become terrifying. What would happen when instructional theater spilled over into daily life?

As we know only too well, life does imitate fiction, for all the world's a stage and everyone is looking for a good script. However, there is a silver lining to the cautionary tale that is about to unfold before our eyes. Through Haslmayr's rash actions, we might yet come, for the first time, closer to the truth of Andreae's original intentions—and source of inspiration—in the composition of what Dr. Christopher McIntosh has called "the greatest publicity stunt of all time."[1]

THE SEARCH FOR THE BROTHERHOOD

The peerless research of Dr. Carlos Gilly has shown scholars that Adam Haslmayr was the spokesman—in over two hundred works—for a kind of new religion. Its name: the *Theophrastia sancta*, or religion of the two lights. The two lights were the light of grace and the light of nature.

According to Gilly's brilliant paper "'*Theophrastia sancta':* Paracelsianism as a Religion in Conflict with the Established Churches"[2] Haslmayr saw the Rose Cross fraternity as an organization in perfect alignment with Paracelsus's religious message. This message had been propounded in a series of theological works written by Paracelsus but hidden until after the great doctor's death (1541), lest premature publication interrupt the progress and healing power of his medical works.

Looking into what Haslmayr understood by Paracelsus's holy Godexpounding gift of spiritual mind expansion, we find not only potent verbiage but also the dangerous waters Andreae had been skirting since at least the time of his friendship with Tobias Hess, in 1608. For example, in 1571–1572, Thomas Erastus's *Disputationum de medicina nova Philippi Paracelsi pars prima* (The first part of the argument on the new medicine of Philipp Paracelsus; Basel, 1571) demanded the death penalty for followers of the magus Paracelsus: "I swear to you by everything that is holy to me:

neither Arius, Photin, nor Mohammed, nor any Turk or heretic were ever so heretical as this unholy magus."

Hysterical opposition to Paracelsus aside (which, at the time of the *Fama*, would be renamed the "Weigelian heresy"), we should mark here a keynote of this early Rosicrucian activity. Contrary to later interpretations of the Rosicrucian phenomenon (which have stressed alchemy and white magic above all else), the field central to the whole story is medicine—and its relation to spiritual knowledge: *Dr*. Paracelsus, *Dr*. Haslmayr, *Dr*. Hess.

Andreae's mother was a court apothecary. A stated rule of the Rose Cross fraternity was to heal the sick *gratis*. This is not a function of modern Rosicrucian organizations. According to the *Fama*, it is primarily sick people, not alchemists or scientists, who first beat a path to the door of the *fratres R.C.* in its first foundation. This vital emphasis and practical focus has been downplayed for four hundred years. Nevertheless, it is also the case that Andreae broadened the itinerary of the fraternity to encompass revolutionary thoughts about the failure of the Reformation, the dereliction of science, the corruption of the universities, and the true meaning of Christianity. But medicine was the core business.

That *frater C.R.* was presented as a herald and knight of truth appealed powerfully to Haslmayr. That is how he saw Paracelsus, the true Christian disciple: truth teller and healer. For Haslmayr, the Rose Cross announcement, first seen by him in 1610, represented nothing less than the breakthrough of the "new religion" or true apostolic religion, formerly held in secret. What was this new religion?

At its root, it was what Paracelsus intended: "a Theophrastian sect, which will triumph, so you will have to acknowledge my philosophy."[3] In his book *De secretis secretorum theologiae* (On the religious speculation of the most secret of secrets; 1531), Paracelsus affirmed his belief in a church of spirit, not of stone, and labeled the pope, Luther, Zwingli, Bucer, and other reformers—along with monks and priests—born liars. He did not want a new sect, in fact, but a situation where sectarianism and competing churches were impossible, since all would be subject to God and nature; truth would be found within the human being. This powerful idea has unmistakable resonance with dominant philosophies of eighteenth-century Freemasonry and may account for much of its Continental success.

Paracelsus was not foolish enough to think such a thing was anything more than a dream—until, that is, the last and golden age. Haslmayr believed such an age was in the process of erupting; he was not alone. The *Fama*, informed by the prophetic apocalypticism of Tobias Hess, encouraged this belief.

According to Alexander von Suchten, writing in about 1575, contrary to those who declared Paracelsus a dangerous heretic, his magical message was nothing "but the very greatest wisdom of the work of God and an acknowledgement of hidden nature."[4]

In 1637, Abraham von Franckenburg would give his work on the correspondences between his co-religionists—men who favored mystic and gnostic Jacob Böhme, the Rosicrucians, and the so-called Weigelian or, more properly, Paracelsian spiritual stream—the title *Theophrastia Valentiniana*, bringing Paracelsus into direct literary contact with perhaps the most original Gnostic teacher of late antique Rome and Egypt, Valentinus.

Valentinus (*fl*. AD 150) believed in a spiritual wedding between Christ and the soul—a kind of chemical wedding. Von Franckenburg—and after him Gottfried Arnold—could see what the author of the *Fama* may himself have been disturbed by: the possibility that the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross was a *gnostic brotherhood*.

Thus, in Carlos Gilly's words, Haslmayr's *Theophrastia sancta* was "a sort of perpetual religion, practised in concealment since the days of the apostles until the time when the 'German Trismegistus, Philippus Theophrastus,' began publicly to expound its meaning."

The *Theophrastia* then was the authentic message of the hidden, or invisible, spiritual church, which, in the last light, would be revealed in all its glory and against which no power would prevail. The *Theophrastia* was based, according to Haslmayr's *Philosophia sagax* (Sharp philosophy), one of many commentaries on the ideas of Paracelsus, on three "cabbalistic principles." These were to be found in Matthew 7:7: "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it will be opened to you."

By "cabbalistic," Haslmayr meant that these statements' deeper spiritual meaning was not apparent to all who heard them, and had been ignored by the external church of wood and stone. This view was, of course, heretical, even if true. For example, who today would have thought that Christ's

injunction to “seek and ye shall find” was a cornerstone message for the whole scientific enterprise: liberating the pioneer from the authority of past scribes—the book-learned without practical, experimental experience? Christ emerges from the vision of Haslmayr as the torch carrier of a rich ethic of scientific liberty! One can therefore imagine what Haslmayr and Paracelsus would think of today’s alleged opposition between science and religion.

According to Haslmayr, asking, seeking, and appealing formed the basis for all progress in the arts and sciences. These principles were supported by the “four rules of our Christendom,” which Haslmayr sent in 1611 to the Jesuit Hippolyt Guarinoni. (Guarinoni had written an anti- Paracelsian work; when Haslmayr vehemently replied, Guarinoni accused Haslmayr of being a heretic.)

Haslmayr’s reading of Paracelsus the theologian gave him the following holy injunctions: (1) to love our enemies; (2) to abandon selfhood; (3) to suffer patiently slander inflicted on us; (4) to refuse to accept all honor bestowed.

Haslmayr believed these rules offered the “key to the holy secret science and the magnalia of God,” the “law, order and policy” of the true Christian. Through these principles and governed by the principle Nosce teipsum or the “holy *Gnothi seauton”—Know thyself,* the observation of the three spirits in humans (animal, astral, and divine), enables human beings to penetrate the sacrament of both the element and the word.

Readers will now be familiar with the Paracelsian idea that there is not only a holy book, but a revelatory Book of Nature and Book of the Universe open to those who have received the grace of knowing the spiritual gospel. This implied critique of scripture-worship (or the idolatry of the external word) is even more pronounced in the theological works of the *Theophrastia sancta*.

Scripture is only a memory of what eternally exists in humankind and makes contact with the divine principles behind nature. Humans cannot understand scripture externally without the true self-knowledge of the inner being. This knowledge-experience or gnosis must come first. It is a result of true spiritual regeneration, the alchemy of divine enlightenment.

The holiest Christian book is a holy person, a living creature: “Honour and reverence to such a being,” as Hermes declares in the Asclepius. The

churches were forever busy attacking him, pointing to paper authority like the scribes of old. As they burned the books, they burned the Man. Time and again, paper covers stone.

The same Theophrastian idea applied to science; no progress would come from those who clung to ancient authority over experience. The hands-on Paracelsus knew better than Aristotle or Galen, as Christ knew better than the scribes with all their past authority. You cannot put new wine in old wineskins. Nothing less than divine inspiration speaking through the cleansed organs of perception can reveal the true secrets of nature. The outer world contains the pointers to dynamic inner truth. This inner life is hidden to the eyes of the external man who knows not himself.

One may think of the eighteenth-century Freemasons' second degree, urging (usually in vain) the fellow craft to enter the hidden mysteries of nature and science. Somehow, these strains of insight trickled into the remnants of the old guild and company system of master masons or architects.

Like the Freemasons after Anderson's Masonic Constitutions of 1723, Paracelsus's religious followers, according to Gilly, "did not concern themselves overmuch with the dogmatic tenets and orthodox confessions of the theologians, and in this sense belonged to those who surpassed not only the confessional confines of the existing churches, but also rejected and combated the churches, pronouncing them to belong to 'external Christendom.'"[5]

According to the *Theophrastia sancta*, the divine word is hidden in all creatures, being the true center and life of all things. At the center of the circle (that is, eternity), the master mason cannot err.

The great tolerance of the Theophrastian religion is also to be found in the *Fama*: all scholars of religion and all other arts and sciences should be permitted free rein to seek and find. This message of freedom, of a second or completed spiritual reformation—a true healing of a divided, bleeding, pus-filled Europe—is at the core of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. What did Haslmayr do about it?

In December 1611, from his home in Heilegenkreuz in the Tyrol, Adam Haslmayr sent a manuscript copy of the *Fama*, along with a manuscript of his

response to it, to his friend the Schwenckfeldian and fellow-Theophrastian alchemist Carl Widemann. Widemann, by agreement, sent the material on to Prince Augustus von Anhalt, his patron, based at Plötzkau on the Anhalt plain.

The nominally Calvinist Augustus was deeply involved in alchemy and had a secret printing press at Plötzkau, ready for dangerous Theophrastian manuscripts, condemned by Protestants and Catholics alike. Thus we have a most remarkable trio for the time: officially, Haslmayr was a Roman Catholic, Widemann a Lutheran, Augustus a Calvinist. The three great confessions of the period were united behind a new revelation, one they all considered to have transcended their accidental confessional differences. This very situation seems remarkably prescient of an ideal Lodge. That the Rosicrucian material itself also demonstrated openness to both Jewish and Islamic traditions of knowledge and mystical insight renders the combination of interests all the more astounding for a time otherwise characterized by intense bigotry and moral indifference.

Prince Augustus von Anhalt, the first man known to have initiated a search for the Rosicrucian Brotherhood.

A fundamentally gnostic insight had the power to transcend religious division.

Haslmayr, in his response to the *Fama*, expressed his gratitude to the Rosicrucians for their "Theophrastiam and divine gift." He saw in them "those, who are now chosen by God, to spread the eternal *Theophrastiam* and divine truth, which has been miraculously preserved until now."

The tower at Augustus von Anhalt's castle at Plötzkau, which once housed his library, where he read the manuscript *Fama Fraternitatis.*

Another view of the tower at Plötzkau, Saxen-Anhalt, Germany.

The castle yard, Plötzkau, Saxen-Anhalt.

In his covering letter, Haslmayr made an impassioned appeal: “Respond you lords and doctors, especially those whom God exhorts, to the *Fama Fraternitatis* C.R., so that sometime we shall be worthy to have these men as teachers, and the disagreeable bad world will recognise the *magnalia* and will be converted, causing our good old pious Lorentz Lutz, too, to heave a heart-felt sigh, because of these Rosicrucian people, who revealed the *Theophrastiam*.”[6] Lutz of Meran was the last living medical assistant of Paracelsus; he was also Haslmayr’s teacher.

The prince of Anhalt was very impressed by all he read, and by early March 1612, Haslmayr’s *Antwort an die lobwürdig Brüderschafft der Theosophen von RosenCreutz N.N. vom Adam Haselmayr* (Answer of Adam Haselmayr to the most worthy Brotherhood of Theosophers of RosenCreutz N.N.) had left the secret press. In spite of the hope that Widemann would distribute Haslmayr’s response to everyone he trusted from Nuremberg to Augsburg, the work disappeared from the world of bibliographies and was discovered only recently by Carlos Gilly, in the archives of Wolfenbüttel.

Haslmayr’s insistence that the Rosicrucian Brothers constituted the true Society of Jesus did not go unnoticed. As far as the Jesuits were concerned, they were the Society of Jesus; that was their official title.

Guarinoni at Innsbruck was angry and denounced Haslmayr again. Haslmayr had already been interrogated by Jesuit theologians in 1603.

Observing non-Catholic content in Haslmayr's ideas, they had nonetheless concluded that he was confused in mind and recommended he cease teaching. But this time, Haslmayr had argued that he did not take his family to the sacraments, not for any love of Luther, or Calvin, or the Protestant heretics, but because Paracelsus and the Rosicrucians had made it clear to him that the age of the Holy Spirit had now begun.

Haslmayr boldly went to Vienna in July 1612 to seek an audience with his past employer, the archduke Maximilian of Austria (Haslmayr had been an imperial secretary, for which he had received letters patent of nobility). He was summoned to the Chancery and given a sealed letter to deliver to the archduke's privy councilors at Innsbruck.

The contents revealed that Haslmayr was to be arrested immediately and in due course dispatched to the galleys at Genoa until he recanted fully and begged the archduke for mercy. This did not deter Adam Haslmayr.

In August, he wrote an *Epistola adhortatoria* (Letter of commendation) to the high chancellery of the archduke Maximilian. In the letter, Haslmayr begged for travel money to go to France in search of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, whence he would return with a brother who would perform marvelous services for the archduke.

Touchingly, Haslmayr writes, as if unaware of his appalling fate, that if he could just find one Brother of the Rosy Cross Society, until then hidden in secret for one hundred years, then he could return with the Book that explained all Nature, for, as he informs his suzerain: "These Brothers have the true Philosophy from Adam, not from Plato, nor Aristotle, nor Galen, nor Cicero."

The brothers possessed the true *Axiomata*, the key to understanding the world, all knowledge of arts theoretical and artificial, including transmutation and all useful sciences. Such a brother, he wrote, would be "worth more than 1000 distressed or puffed-up timeservers, for the Brothers have the sacramental elements of the Word by which the sick are made well and by which the wicked, the Turks and the Jews will become converted, their swords and weapons cast down."

Haslmayr suggested such a brother might be to the archduke as Aristotle was to Alexander the Great. The archduke could enjoy the knowledge of a Miracle Man, a truly just man, subsisting on God's command: a master.

It would appear that the archduke was not thrilled at the prospect of meeting a master. Unmoved, Maximilian had already determined Haslmayr's judgment and sentence. The troublesome Theophrastian was not to be given travel money to head for Montpellier, as he innocently requested, to search for the Rosicrucians, but instead could look forward to four and a half years as a galley convict, a chained oarsman, an abandoned wretch.

Again via a recent discovery (of Carlos Gilly's), we can now hear from Adam Haslmayr himself about his experience from an account in Widemann's hand dictated by his friend in April 1622 and now resting in the Niedersachsisches Staatsarchiv, Wolfenbüttel. Before sentence was passed on October 31, 1612, the Capucin and Jesuit inquisition examination demanded to know where Haslmayr's copies of the writings of the *fratres R.C.* had come from (he does not tell us). Correspondence three months earlier between Widemann and Prince August of Anhalt, however, reveals that copies of the *Fama* could be obtained from Dr. Hess of Tübingen.

And so Adam Haslmayr, who believed himself privy to the pristine *gnosis* of his namesake, was delivered to a galley called St. George, "my garments torn, hair and beard shaved," chained to the galley "like a dog." And there he stayed until June 1, 1617, in his heavy bonds, with awful food, little sleep, severe winds, frost, rain-sodden for days on end, now in Genoa, now in Sabon, Ligorno, Corsica, Naples, Messina.

At the time the *Fama* was published in 1614, the derelict Haslmayr suffered from a hunger so great that the fragments of baked biscuits secretly tossed to him by imprisoned Turks burned his throat. And this rancid pain was, he told his friend, the height of his pleasure aboard the galley for all those years. This, one might observe, was the sentence of the church of stone.

The stinking galley carried Spanish soldiers fleeing from the war in Savoy and guileless German soldiers to Genoa. Haslmayr witnessed despairs and a "sodomitic life" on the galleys that should not, he says, cross the ears of the pure. And yet, he asserts, this was "his journey." Haslmayr, the forgotten hero, raised his voice against all the judges, opinion givers, and potentates under the Holy Roman Empire—"especially those of Austria," the "Christian men already condemned," as he called them. And through it all, and at the end, he confessed himself to be a Christian Theophrastian, unrepentant.

And so we come to a question: Why did this Christian Theophrastian,

Adam, the first man to seek out the Rosicrucians and who found a kind of personal road to both Damcar and Golgotha, why had he been so sure that money from the archduke would bring results in Montpellier?

Had he glimpsed something that subsequent history has failed to see? Could it be that Haslmayr got (at least an aspect of) the joke that so eluded his contemporaries?

A HOUSE IN THE LANGUEDOC

We should first observe that Haslmayr's printed *Antwort* of 1612 was addressed to "the most worthy Brotherhood of Theosophers of RosenCreutz *N.N.*"

According to the *Deutsche Wörterbuch* by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm (1881), the abbreviation N.N. is "used instead of a name that is not known (Latin: *nomen nescio*) or that cannot be mentioned (Latin: *notetur nomen*)." N.N. means Anonymous. Haslmayr associated the N.N. not only with the Brother N.N. who succeeds Brother A in *Gallia Narbonensis* (as we saw in the last chapter), but with the brotherhood as a whole. Was this the clue for Haslmayr?

Montpellier is a principal city of the old Roman province of Gallia Narbonensis. Montpellier was famous, above all, for medicine. We may also note that in Andreae's *Breviarium* (Summary) account of his journeys of 1610, he recorded that he went to "Gall," which could simply be short for "Gallia" (Gaul, that is, France) or for "Gallia Narbonensis," a little clue. Andreae often wrote place-names according to the old Roman Latin names for the tribes who predominated.

To recap from the *Fama*, we are told that Brother N.N. decided "(he being a good architect) to alter something of his building and to make it more fit." In the process of alteration, he uncovers a memorial plate of brass. In the plate is a "great nail." Removing it immediately dislodges a large stone and plastering that have long obscured a hidden door. On the door is a prophetic message: "I shall be opened after 120 years."

The door leads to the miraculous resting place of the perfect corpse of Father CR. The incident, as we noted in the last chapter, is instantly allegorized: "For like as our door was after so many years wonderfully

discovered, also there shall be opened a door to Europe (when the wall is removed) which already doth begin to appear, and with great desire is expected of many."

Haslmayr was a doctor. He knew very well that the greatest medical school of the Renaissance was to be found at Montpellier. If one was going to found a new school of medicine, Montpellier would be the place to do it. And the place was well known to be in need of revival, as we shall see. A century had passed since its best times, but a memory of something extraordinary lay in its past.

Haslmayr may even have been aware of a famous "immoral tale" that I strongly suspect Andreae had in mind when he wrote the *Fama*'s mystery story, a tale that contains the seeds of a lewd or dirty joke that I believe shaped this allegory of broken masonry. Andreae in his youth, as we have seen, was not at all averse to lewd humor, so long as it implied intellectual acuity.

THE DECAMERON

The lewd tale of which I am thinking is the story of Juliet of Narbonne and her object of desire, Bertrand, count of Roussillon, the ninth novel of the "third day" of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, written during the heyday of Montpellier and its institutional source, the island of Maguelone, across the wet sands of Montpellier, in the mid-fourteenth century.

Boccaccio's story had been translated into French in 1545 by one Antoine le Maçon, Anthony the Mason, secretary to Margaret of Navarre. (Interestingly, Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas was also a poet patronized by the House of Navarre.) Whether the translator's name—Anthony the Mason—inspired Andreae's choice of occupation for Brother N.N. must remain conjectural. It seems a good clue, and the *Fama* itself begs its reader to see its account as an allegory.

Europe will *see* when the wall is removed.

Boccaccio's story is commended to "the Good Judgement and Understanding in Ladies or Gentlewomen, that are of a Quick and Apprehensive Spirit." Is Boccaccio's story also an allegory, carrying more than simply a tale of lust rewarded?

Isnarde, count of Roussillon (in the diocese of Narbonne), kept a physician at home, a master of the art, Master Gérard of Narbonne, who had trained at Montpellier. The count has one son, Bertrand, whose comeliness attracts Juliet, Gérard of Narbonne's daughter. But soon Bertrand is a widow's son and is made ward to the king of France, far from Juliet, for whom the new count cares not a bit.

Meanwhile, the king of France is suffering. The cause is an anal fistula from whose agonies none can deliver him. This is Juliet's chance. "With remembrance of those rules of Art, which (by long practice and experience) she had learned of her skilful father, she compounded certain herbs together, such as she knew fitting for that kind of infirmity, and having reduced her compound into powder, away she rode forthwith to Paris."

The king, assured of her modesty, "laid it open to her view."

As a favor for relief rendered, Juliet begs of the king her heart's desire, the hand of Bertrand. The king asks: "How is it possible for thee, being a young maiden, to do that which the best Physicians in Europe, are not able to perform?"

"Great king, let not my skill and experience be despised, because I am young, and a Maiden [music to Paracelsian ears!]; for my profession is not Physick; neither do I undertake the ministering thereof depending on my own knowledge; but by the gracious assistance of heaven, and some rules of skilful observation, which I learned of reverend Gérard of Narbonne who was my worthy father, and a Physician of no mean fame, all the while he lived."

The king wonders if the virgin has not been sent to him "by the direction of heaven," and readily grants her wish. But the count despises the offer: "Would your Highness give me a Quacksalver to my Wife, one that deals with drugs and Physicarie?"

Surely, such a line would have struck young Andreae, whose widowed mother, Maria Moser, went to Tübingen as court apothecary from 1607 to 1617, knowing all about the vagaries of aristocratic patronage. Juliet, in the story, becomes a wandering pilgrim (how apt for an Andreaean heroine!) but in due course tricks Bertrand, pretending to be a wench he is besotted with. Having obtained two sons by this means and fulfilled the conditions of Bertrand's interest, she brings her sons to Montpellier, "where she rested her self for divers days, after so long and wearisome a journey"—a century

before the doctor and satirist François Rabelais (b. 1490) found like solace in that place.

Juliet presents herself and her sons to the count at the solemn feast of All Saints' Day: "High time is it now, if men of honour respect their promises, and after so long and tedious travel, I should at last be welcomed as thy true wife." In a lusty *mysterium coniunctionis*, Count Bertrand is truly married to the fair Juliet of Narbonne.

Now back to the allegory! If the story of the breaking down of the wall into Father CR's tomb is an allegory of Europe waking up to the amazing potential of the times, then this allegory may also carry a secondary, earthier allegorical subtext. Let us be blunt; Andreae was, when it suited him.

The removal of the fistula from the king's behind by a Narbonnese virgin is directly parallel to the removal of the nail by another Narbonnese virgin that dislodges the stone and plaster blocking the entrance to the hidden secrets of Rosenkreuz's tomb. In short, Europe had something nasty stuck up its arse that wanted shifting. When it has been removed, the wall that divides Christians may be broken down and the spiritual path to perfection may be revealed once more.

As the *Fama* puts it: "There shall be a door opened to Europe (when the wall is removed)." The wall is that which is blocking the full flowering of health and destiny of the patient/king/continent.

The virgin with her Montpellier-rooted treatment can do with her experience, observation, and hands-on approach (how very Paracelsian!) more than all the physicians—the clever men—of Europe. One should note Andreae's interest in the radical reformer Sebastian Franck's *Paradoxa*, one of whose sentences declares, "The learned are perverted," an important theme of the *Fama* and of subsequent works by Andreae.

Juliet, the virgin with a will, takes no money for her work (like a good Rosicrucian), only the promise of a good marriage to be, when all men honor their promises. The formerly blind Bertrand, literally "in the dark" over Juliet's identity at the moment of consummation, is restored to truthful vision by the sight of his children and accepts his responsibilities for the future.

As we have noted, when scorned in love, Juliet adopts the life of a pure pilgrim, a wanderer, an outsider or alien, traveling (like a Rose Cross

Brother) incognito until finding rest at Montpellier. We may think of Andreae's novel *Turbo*, about another wanderer who makes himself sick pursuing a romantic dream (traveling, like Juliet, to Paris) until being found by a divine providence that cures him and makes of him a new temple of Holy Spirit.

Andreae could hardly have been unfamiliar with Boccaccio's classic story of lewd sense and raw goodness. As was his style, he subsumed it into his own allegory of a cure for Europe. Like Juliet, he was motivated by love.

Another literary genius, known to the world as Shakespeare, did not even bury the allegory. *All's Well That Ends Well* (published nine years after the *Fama*) is a straightforward lifting of Boccaccio's story into a theatrical setting. Julia Cleave's paper "Burlesquing the Brotherhood," delivered at Canonbury Masonic Research Centre's International Conference in 2005, showed how the Bard stuffed the play with apparently proto- Masonic references—where the verb *cure*, for example, is interestingly expressed as "raise."

For those who took the *Fama* too literally, the satirist Andreae could always chuckle to himself at the class of joke we all know concerning anal retention of one kind or another.

Even the account in the *Fama* as written is something of a giveaway to the attentive. Brother N.N., we are told, "thought (he being a good architect) to alter something of his building and make it more fit." The "building" of central interest to the *Fama* is the House of the Holy Spirit. The temple that the true mason or architect works on, according to St. Paul, is the spiritual body, cured from within by Christ within us: the inner sun that lights the vault of Father CR's body/tomb in whose Vitruvian harmony is the whole of the universe.

Father CR is an allegorical microcosm, a revelation of the Miracle Man buried beneath a century of reactionary violence and pseudo-reformation. Anyone who doubts Andreae's contempt for Lutheran triumphalism should read his anonymous satire *Menippus* of 1617, banned in Tübingen. The Christian's body is a temple of the spirit. Paul is explicit on this, and Andreae would have known the text backward, forward, and sideways.

Andreae (along with Paracelsus and his friend Dr. Tobias Hess) recognized that the state of the body reflected the spiritual condition of the person. Thus

in *Christian Mythologies* (1618), Dame Truth herself is represented as a rotting cadaver, having been trodden into the "shit of the lie" by the listed evils of fake reformers and numbskulls.

As with the body, so with the continent: *There shall be a door open to Europe*—when the fistula is removed. N.N. the nameless—*it could be you*—must pull the nail out to reveal the blockage; then the door will be opened to him. *Seek and ye shall find*.

Once the wall is broken down, once vision is restored, the amazing vault, lit by an inner sun, is revealed. This is the house of the heart that illuminates the body, maintaining it "whole and unconsumed."

In 1353, Boccaccio located his *Decameron* in a realistic setting, that is, the terrible plague that had disfigured Florence and taken away Boccaccio's mother. The one hundred tales are told by seven ladies and three gentlemen who have escaped the ravages of the sick city to find fresh air in the countryside; the city stinks. The ostensible purpose of the stories was to offer consolation to unhappy lovers. The storyteller may also be a doctor of the spirit, if he be true.

Juliet and Gérard of Narbonne's special medicine seems to have been required by the quacks of Florence, unable to stem the rancid tide of plague. The theme of the stupidity, "pride and covetousness" of the savants who can never suffer to agree on anything—unlike the wise of distant Damcar—is a keynote of the *Fama Fraternitatis*.

If only the learned would come together in humility and honest seeking from whatever source the grace of God was offering (even the foreign East), they could come to the "clear and manifested light and truth," declares the *Fama* in a powerfully Theophrastian phrase.

The pride of Bertrand must be overcome by the light of Juliet, the light of true love: the fruit of the graces. The Theophrastian religion looked to the two lights: the light of grace and the light of nature. Had there ever been a place where such openness of approach had actually been practiced? Indeed there had.

MONTPELLIER AND MAGUELONE

As early as 1137, there were excellent physicians in Montpellier who owed

their success to the unique policy of the Guilhem lords of Montpellier, who welcomed the Jewish doctors who may have founded the first medical school.

Here was a hidden treasure of France, and of Europe.

Why? Because it was the lords' policy to permit any licensed physician to lecture there; there was no limit to the number of teachers. Knowledge could be shared and differences of approach discussed and tolerated. New ideas found welcome—unlike the treatment meted out to *frater C.R.* in the *Fama*.

By statutes given in 1220 by Cardinal Conrad von Urach, legate of Pope Honorius III, confirmed and extended in 1240, the schools were placed under the direction of a series of enlightened bishops of Maguelone who permitted a great deal of de facto autonomy. Maguelone has been described as a "veritable democratic Republic," governed by two men elected for life, the bishop and the provost. The bishops dressed so poorly, it is reported, that the pope intervened, concerned that a bishop should appear more dignified to his diocese.

The canons of Maguelone were very hospitable, warmly receiving all visitors in the same way, whether they were Christians, Jews, Saracens, or lepers. The poor were well treated. In bad times they were sheltered on the other side of the bridge, and food was carried to them by the canons, while on processional days they were invited to walk with the canons and eat in their refectory, the bishop shaking the hand of every one in turn while blessing each in his state, as wine was offered them. In the thirteenth century, several of the prelates distinguished themselves as troubadours.

In respect of Father CR's good relations with the sages of Damcar and Fez, it is worth noting that after the Arab invasions of 710, the Saracen leaders permitted the Christians in general to exercise their religion at Maguelone, and built a port, known as the Port of the Saracens throughout Montpellier's golden age. It was Christian Charles Martel who demolished the Christian church at Maguelone as part of his war with the Arabs, seeing the Port of the Saracens as a gaping hole in Christendom's defenses.

Perhaps the idea of a Port of the Saracens attached to a truly Christian community and school of medicine inspired Andreae to take his hero to the East in search of a wisdom he recognized and cared for.

There are other connections, of course, for those who want only to connect. Guillaume Pellicier gained the Episcopal seat of Maguelone at the intervention of Margaret d'Alençon, sister of the king, François I. She would later become the queen of Navarre, and as such her secretary was the Antoine le Maçon who translated the *Decameron* for her enjoyment in 1545.

Guillaume Pellicier became an ardent supporter of the Renaissance at Montpellier. He was a friend of the doctor and writer François Rabelais and had a great passion for natural history. This passion would result in France's first botanical garden, founded in 1593 at Montpellier.

After Pellicier, Montpellier went into decline, suffering from the general retreat from the Renaissance vision signaled by the deliberations of the Council of Trent, the Lutheran and Calvinist attack on the spiritual reformers, and the exacerbation of the wars of religion. Pellicier's successors shrouded Maguelone in gloom, and the place became more and more deserted.

FRANÇOIS RABELAIS AND THE ROSICRUCIAN BROTHERHOOD

The connection between Rabelais and the *Fama* is instructive. Gabriel Naudé's *Instruction à la France sur la vérité de l'histoire des Frères de la Rose-Croix*, published during the Rosicrucian scare in Paris in 1623, compared the extraordinary story of the Rose Cross Brotherhood not only to Thomas More's *Utopia* but also to François Rabelais's "Abbey of Thélème" from his comedic epic *The Heroic Deeds of Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

In making such superficially negative comparisons, Naudé was doubtless aware that these apparently lighthearted works of imagination were nonetheless fictions with serious and potentially subversive meanings. That is to say, fact is informed by fiction, reality by imagination. The *Fama*, while drinking from a labyrinthine fantasy world, should not, Naudé implied, be dismissed. The *Fama*'s ambiguous character was established early on in its long career. But how could the *Fama Fraternitatis* come to be compared to Rabelais's *Heroic Deeds of Gargantua and Pantagruel?*

Let us look to the gates of Rabelais's "Abbey of Thélème." They bear the words "Here enter not vile bigots"! That would have been much to Andreae's liking, as would be all that followed. No narrow-minded, pompous churl, no

puffed-up hypocrite—especially if a denizen of the corrupt church and universities—will ever enter the abbey of "Do what thou wilt." To them, the abbey will always be closed, or nonexistent.

Thelema (Greek for "will") is, according to Rabelais, the ideal abbey only for the best kind of person. The abbey's sole watchword, "Do what thou wilt," was pure in the hearts of the good; to the blasphemous world outside, blasphemy. Only in the heart of the natural-born Thelemite could the abbey have any existence. To be in the abbey was truly to be *on the inside*. This was a place for those the outside world treated as "outsiders," aliens, wanderers. It was a place for people who understood what was meant by "minding your own business."

François Rabelais, born in about 1490, and thus a contemporary of Paracelsus, took holy orders, quarreled with his convent, and after fifteen years of the religious life threw away his Franciscan frock in the company of his friend Friar Pierre Amy. He then traveled up and down France in a Benedictine habit until at last finding solace at the schools of Montpellier.

Rabelais took a degree in medicine, practiced it, and lectured on it until 1535, when his hospital dismissed him, alleging lax discipline. All these details would have touched chords with the experience and ideals of Johann Valentin Andreae, born just under a century after Rabelais.

We may recall that Andreae's cheek led him to a new life as a traveling scholar; perhaps that is what he had subconsciously desired when he thought to pin his filth to the fateful door. Teaching young nobles, Andreae hiked with his students through Switzerland, France, Austria, and Italy. Like another inspired itinerant who came after him, Joachim Morsius, Andreae seems to have been in search of the Absolute: a quite proper objective for a young and gifted romantic out on his feet.

People who travel under their own steam, opening themselves up directly to authentic experience, always appealed strongly to Andreae (as they did to Paracelsus)—and of course this ideal is encapsulated in the young runaway monk *frater C.R.*, of the *Fama*, who would have to traverse as far away as Arabia for intellectual satisfaction.

Seek and ye shall find.

But by the early seventeenth century, Montpellier's once great home of

medicine was in a poor condition. It is surely significant that a visit in 1596 from the extraordinary Swiss brothers Platter (who had once studied medicine at Montpellier) reported that Maguelone's hospital was in ruins and the place generally was in a bad state. The depredations were the result of battles between Catholics and Protestants, during which time the canons were chased out of Montpellier. The religion of "Love your enemies" had become the religion of "Burn your enemies, steal their houses."

Was Brother N.N. minded to repair this building too? Is this where Andreae got part of his inspiration from?

And yet, the place had once held such promise, a treasure in the south of France devalued by those enslaved to external confessions and who believed —and continue to believe—that God is to be served by warriors, rather than healers.

Felix Platter, son of the amazing itinerant peasant Thomas Platter, who had done so much to further the sixteenth-century educational renaissance, became, after his studies in Montpellier, Switzerland's most famous doctor after Paracelsus. He was the first to distinguish between various types of mental disorders, and—with an echo of Boccaccio—he described in detail the etiology and proper diagnosis of plague. He seems like an ideal member of the invisible fraternity.

It seems to me that Haslmayr, reading the *Fama,* put two and two together and made only one error, namely, that the Rose Cross Brotherhood—though not necessarily under that name—was reopening a visible school to the true-hearted who wished to recover the light. This error cost Haslmayr dearly; was Andreae responsible for this?

That the main author of the *Fama* wished for such a revival cannot be in any doubt; the Rosicrucian manifestos gave its rules and its priorities. Nevertheless, ever the satirist, Andreae suspected that it was, given all the circumstances of the period, a utopian dream waiting for a better time—though today would be a good time to start.

Paracelsus reckoned such a miracle of creative harmony could only come in the last age of this world. Andreae reckoned it unwise to predict such things; time has proved him right, and the end-of-the-worlders should listen to what he was saying. Andreae reckoned apocalyptic obsessions always come when the church is slowing down and not attending to its proper

business.

But if people could imagine such a thing, then such a thing might yet be. The fiction could make the reality. Belief can make things so; faith can move mountains, build houses. Furthermore, the significance given in this account to Montpellier in *Gallia Narbonensis* shows also that something like the Fraternity R.C. had existed once. It was even to be found on an island, like Andreae's utopian *Christianopolis* (1618). The island of hope needed to be rediscovered again, from within, or disinterred from memory, by means of good medicine: the medicine of truth. If that involved a sharp, but skillful, administration to an unmentionable vessel, then so mote it be. The result could be a golden age, a renaissance reborn, a second reformation, or at least a considerably healthier patient.

Is not the story we have uncovered as vitally appropriate to our situation today as regards health, wealth, and global happiness as it was when poor Adam Haslmayr nearly choked on the crumbs that fell from the fingers of captive Turks?

Haslmayr made a journey that we have yet to make. Fixated on the fantasy, we have lost sight of the reality of the fiction. For Haslmayr, the fiction was reality. Perhaps this was the reason that Andreae removed himself from general inquiries about the source of the invisible fraternity; he wanted it to stay invisible. Furthermore, he may well have been deeply embarrassed, if not genuinely hurt, on hearing what had happened to poor Adam Haslmayr. Such embarrassment would surely explain why Carl Widemann never found satisfaction from his request to the home of Tobias Hess for a copy of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*.

The *Fama* had made its first "hit," and it had blown up in its recipient's face.

If Andreae had ever toyed with the idea of getting more involved with the game he had started, surely the strange case of Adam Haslmayr would have stopped him in his tracks. While he was playing, another Christian was enduring every kind of misery that Andreae might have hoped in his wildest dreams could be prevented by a universal salve of love and brotherhood.

In fact, Haslmayr was not cut off from the efforts of those who cared for him. Thanks to the protection of the powerful alchemical enthusiast Andrea Grimaldi of Genoa, and especially to Prince August of Anhalt's quiet

diplomacy with Antonio de’ Medici, Haslmayr was eventually released, his health, but not heart, broken, on June 1, 1617. He would go to live at the house of his old friend, Carl Widemann in Augsburg, where he continued to write on the *Theophrastia sancta* as if the hell of the galleys had been an unfortunate interruption to the life of his soul.

SEVEN

THE REFORMATION OF THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD

It can hardly be coincidental that at the very time Adam Haslmayr made his final statement to the Jesuit and Capucin inquisitors who consigned him to the galleys as a "penance," an arrest warrant was issued for one Benedictus Figulus, in Freiburg in Breisgau. The arrest warrant was dated October 31, 1612, and may be seen today in the Tyroler Landesarchiv, Innsbruck.

Figulus had been a friend of Haslmayr since 1607 and like him was a committed Theophrastian apologist. Figulus was also the editor of the second edition of Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae solius verae* (Amphitheater of eternal wisdom; Hanau, 1609). Khunrath's extraordinarily illustrated text has long been associated with the vision of the "Rosicrucians."

The arrest warrant would have done the Gestapo proud. Dr. Figulus was accused of "suspected complicity" with Haslmayr's "wicked involvement with the twisting of religion." Haslmayr's punishment would serve to reeducate him.

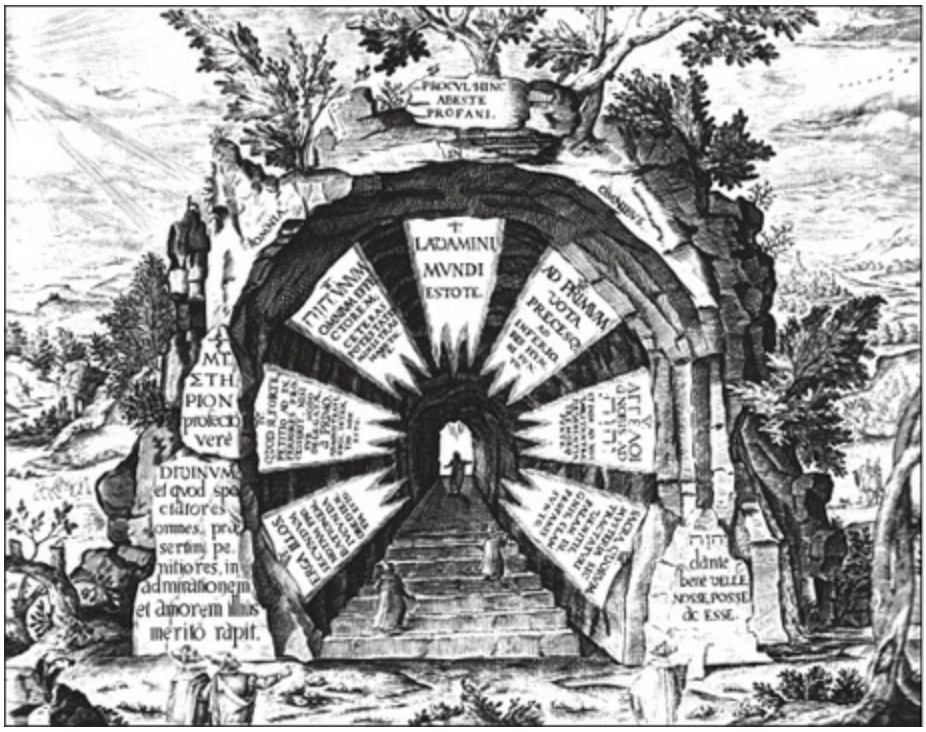
The authorities had made a thorough search of Haslmayr's house, where they found "sufficient evidence" to prove that he and Figulus had corresponded, exchanging information with each other. They were clearly "adherents of the same sect." Their wickedness was to be "nipped in the bud," "to prevent the spread of their heresies." The Innsbruck inspectors were therefore sending to Freiburg all the writings suspected of having been sent to Haslmayr by Figulus so that appropriate punishment might be visited upon them both as soon as possible, or rather, as the warrant charmingly puts it,

“so that their guilt may be extracted from them at our leisure.”

Heinrich Khunrath, portrait from *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae solius verae*, Hamburg, 1595. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

The warrant recommended that they be arrested secretly and taken into custody. The arresting agents should make a point of investigating “the suspected hidden points in their writings, especially those to do with religion.” “Examine them seriously,” the inspectors were told, “with all necessary attention.” They were also to find out what Figulus might distribute in the way of documents or papers. The Freiburg officers were then requested to send their references together with their conclusions. They were permitted to make copies before forwarding the required information to Innsbruck.

It had long been thought that Figulus had escaped the clutches of the inquisitors until a scrap of paper was returned from Russia to Hamburg in the 1990s to be examined by Carlos Gilly. The autographed manuscript of Figulus contained a translation of verses from the Bible in German couplets. From the wording, it was clear that the words had been written by Figulus “in prison,” whence he was only released on November 8, 1617, five months after Haslmayr’s liberation from the galleys.



Entering the secrets of nature, engraving from *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae solius verae*, Hamburg, 1595. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Figulus had visited Haslmayr at his home in Heilegenkreuz in the Tyrol from December 1610 to January 1611. Haslmayr was by then already in possession of a copy of the *Fama*. We know that a month after Figulus left Haslmayr, Figulus's friend Johann Gessler in Strasbourg was making his copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. That copy survives to this day and is lodged in the Wellcome Library in London, along with a text in the hand of Figulus and a text by Marburg theologian and alchemist Raphael Eglin.

FAMA FRATERNITATIS

Manuscript copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, made by Johann Gessler of Strasbourg in 1612, possibly after a copy passed to him by either Adam Haslmayr or Benedictus Figulus.

Did Gessler get his copy from Haslmayr or from Figulus? Gilly thinks it most likely that Gessler's copy came from Haslmayr, because in the course of his relationship with Figulus, the latter was perennially the taker, not the giver.

It would appear that many of Haslmayr's papers, including a copy of the *Fama*, were sent by Figulus to Hesse-Kassel or personally deposited by Figulus with Raphael Eglin, based at Marburg, where Figulus had visited, "pushing" alchemical tracts. This scenario is not, however, certain.

It is nonetheless the case that many of Haslmayr's manuscripts eventually came to be among those of Raphael Eglin, chemist and natural philosopher to Moritz the Learned, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, whose court was in Kassel. Among those manuscripts was a copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis*.

Why do we suspect Eglin brought Haslmayr's manuscripts from Marburg to Kassel? Because a number of them, indicated by references to "a pious

man," a doctor with the initials "A. H.," were found there by Rosicrucian enthusiast Joachim Morsius of Lübeck. Morsius published a list of 228 specialized manuscripts on magic, Cabala, medicine, and philology in Amsterdam in 1626 (*Nuncius Olympicus von etzlichen geheimen Bücheren und Schrifften* [Olympian announcement of various secret books and writings]).

Morsius, incidentally, followed his own track in pursuing the true meaning of the Rosicrucian writings, and his journey would bring him into contact with many of the key figures associated with the early Rosicrucian movement, including Johannes Arndt, Comenius, Jacob Böhme, Abraham von Franckenberg, and Andreae himself.

From these few paragraphs alone, we can already sketch out the destiny of the *Fama* now that its availability was utterly out of Andreae's control. Others would shape what Andreae had begun, and it would not be to his liking. Andreae did not like either Khunrath or Figulus. Khunrath's search for Christ, the Philosopher's Stone hidden in the womb of nature, was regarded by Andreae as excessive and immoderate. Khunrath set out an exclusive, privileged route, through a combination of theosophical religion and Paracelsian alchemy, to the ultimate secret of eternal wisdom. His outlook was fundamentally gnostic.

"We are cleansed of the world; be ye!" declares Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum*.

As far as Andreae was concerned, this pattern of "Christo-Cabalistic Magic" (Khunrath's phrase) went all too far, suggesting the existence of a para-religion that somehow ignored—or thought it transcended—Christianity's sacrament of brotherhood and selfless love in the real, fallen world of wayward sinners. He called those who followed this would-be elite path the *curiosi*, the "curious"; Andreae cared for the cat.

That the *Fama* was taken as an encouragement for this movement undoubtedly turned Andreae against much of the one-sided and literalist interpretation of his work. However, according to Roland Edighoffer, Andreae's distaste did not prevent him lifting the figure of John Dee's hieroglyphic monad from an illustration in Khunrath and placing it next to the wedding invitation in *The Chemical Wedding*, if, that is, Andreae himself sanctioned this usage (Andreae's role in the publication of The Chemical

Wedding in 1616 is obscure). Indeed, Andreae may have obtained the monas sign from Dee's own work himself, though he never wrote of it.

What makes it most likely that Figulus took the *Fama* with him to Hesse-Kassel is the long-standing anger regarding Figulus exhibited by Andreae thirty years later in his autobiography. In that work, he dismissed Figulus as a "betrayer" and a "globetrotter." Clearly, Andreae was less than content at the thought of what Figulus had done. As far as we can tell, the effect of the "Kassel-connection" was loathsome to Andreae for many years.

As for Figulus's contact in Marburg, Raphael Eglin, he—like Khunrath—had been active in Basel in the previous century (Khunrath matriculated as a medical student at Basel University in May 1587), and we should be correct in assuming an extended circle of Paracelsian ideologues with almost limitless metaphysical agendas. For them, as for Adam Haslmayr, the *Fama* came as a divine gift, a fulfillment of the prophecies of their master Paracelsus.

RAPHAEL EGLIN

Raphael Iconius Eglinus was a Swiss Paracelsian who, after studying in Calvinist Geneva, established himself as a theologian in Basel. In 1591, Eglin published an erudite treatise on Psalm 133 (*Oratio de concordi fratrum societate* [Oration on the concord of the brother of the society]; Zürich, 1591).

The treatise dealt with three themes that would later bear strange fruit in Eglin's Rosicrucian sympathies: dew (Latin: *ros*), brotherhood, and everlasting life:

> Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.
>
> (Psalm 133; cf. Mark 14:3 and the lady with the costly ointment)

Susanna Åkerman has compared the “blissful language” of this early work of Eglin’s with his later willingness to put his weight behind the distinctly antipapal tone of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* twenty-four years later.[1] Such a politicization of Eglin’s outlook was doubtless connected with the violent effects of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. However, Eglin’s anti-Catholic feelings would surely have been particularized by the knowledge that his old friend and teacher Giordano Bruno—the man who gave the world the idea of an infinite universe—was burned at the stake in Rome as an “impenitent heretic” in 1600.

Eglin first encountered the charismatic Dominican friar in Basel. Eglin played scribe as Bruno dictated to him a summary of his metaphysical conceptions, *De ente descensu*. This short work was published by Eglin as *Summa terminorum metaphysicorum* (A summary of metaphysical terms) in Basel in 1595.

The Inquisition had gotten Bruno and, now, Haslmayr. Who would be next?

Was there, we must ask, an essential doctrine held in common by Bruno and Haslmayr that so outraged Roman Catholic authority? Perhaps there was. What Bruno dictated to Eglin in Basel in 1595 contained the key revolutionary insight that could also be found in Bruno’s remarkable work *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, written in Paris between 1584 and 1585, and placed in the mouth of Sophia, the divine Wisdom. The idea would come to be accepted as a key possession of Rosicrucian ideology:

> God . . . is in all things. . . . Thus one should think of *Sol* [the astrological and alchemical Sun] as being in a crocus, a daffodil, a sunflower, in the cock, in the lion; and thus one should conceive of each of the gods through each of the species. . . . For as the divinity descends in a certain manner inasmuch as it communicates itself to nature, so there is an ascent made to divinity through nature. Thus through the light which shines in natural things one mounts up to the life which presides over them.

God is in everything. Therefore God is in humankind. The light of God that shines in the macrocosm, enlivening everything through astrological vivifiers, also shines in the microcosm. The alchemically potent signs of

planet, star, and angel can be seen in nature by those with the grace to see them. To see them is to become a cosmic being, a co-creator with the magic of nature.

As the wheels of the heavens turn, cosmic rays enter the fluids and inner structure of animal, vegetable, and mineral, affecting the "soul of the world" and causing fundamental changes in life and consciousness. The Earth is thus —like humans—an alchemical vessel whose pangs of new birth could be heard "in earthquake, wind and fire," as human beings also suffer in bringing to remembrance their divine home.

The Brother of the Rose Cross sought a complete alphabet of natural signs, the language of Adam, which the *Fama* declared had been understood and translated into a *Rota* by Father C.R. With this knowledge, he could trace a process of divine evolution in matter and consciousness, which two are not separate, but one, being from one.

The church possesses the externals of the doctrine but, having sold its soul to the unregenerate world, denies the interior substance, lest the true spirit be awakened and Man become free: a new Adam. The Stone is everywhere to be found, but nowhere seen. The Stone is also within. The Being of Light knows more than the violent churches and religions will ever know.

In the *Confessio Fraternitatis* of the invisible brotherhood, the ability to read the living signs in nature transpires to be the essential badge of membership, or spiritual fraternity: the one who can read "those great letters and characters which the Lord God hath written and imprinted in heaven and earth's edifice . . . the same is already (although as yet unknown to himself) ours."

The one who interprets life in this way *is already (although as yet unknown to himself) ours*. This is an extraordinary statement. Election to the invisible brotherhood is thus *by consciousness only*. True brothers will recognize what is essential of themselves in the other. Thus would the fraternity be revealed—paradoxically—by its essential nature's very invisibility!

Thus, when Eglin responded to the publication of the *Fama* in March 1614, he felt he could sign himself off as "the least of the brothers R.C." (*Assertio Fraternitatis R.C.* [A declaration of the Brotherhood R.C.]; Frankfurt, Johann Bringer, 1614). He knows he is not a paid-up member, but

he feels, humbly, in deep fraternity with their essential vision. One would imagine that someone who had spent creative time with the great Giordano Bruno could hardly feel anything else!

ASSERTIO
FRATERNITATIS
R. C. QVAM ROSEÆ
CRVCIS vocant, à quodam Fraternitatis
eius Socio Carmine expressa.
AD LECTOREM.
Quisquis de Rosea dubitas Crucis ordine Fratrum:
Hoc lege, perlecto Carmine certus eris.
FRANCOFVRTI,
EX OFFICINA TYPOGRAPHICA

Assertio Fraternitatis R.C. quam Roseae Crucis vocant, by “B.M.I” (attributed to Raphael Eglin), Frankfurt, Johann Bringer, 1614; an early response to the printed *Fama*.

This powerful inner experience would repeat itself across Europe and across time, for it is sure that somebody reading this book—you know who you are—is already thinking on similar lines.

Whether Andreae knew it or knew it not—or even whether he liked it or not—he had, in fact, created a most powerful synthesis of the essential spiritual revolt against ecclesiastical and university authority that had been raging beneath the skin of Europe for centuries. Not only did this synthesis represent an ideological breakthrough, but it was also a stroke of marketing genius, since the story was encapsulated in a mysterious, polyvalent, and brilliant story of quest, discovery, and profound invitation.

As we shall see, the *Confessio Fraternitatis*’s statement (which reappeared in the *Theca gladii spiritus* in 1616) that the doctrine of the brotherhood contained much medicine and theology, “but little of the wisdom of the law,” highlighted what I think would become the sticking point for its creator, the political implications: law and order; the world of repression and material power. Andreae was, I surmise from his works, content with evolutionary and harmonious development (he deeply mistrusted apocalypticism); others were

more willing to entertain catastrophic forms of change. They did not distrust apocalyptic revelation, they embraced and reveled in it.

One of those people was Raphael Eglin.

HESSE-KASSEL

As if Eglin needed reminding of the gathering pace of Roman Catholic activism against the Reformation, his experiences of 1596 would surely confirm his suspicions. In that year, Eglin was forced out of Basel by a Catholic insurgency.

Eglin would find solace in the Calvinist state of Hesse-Kassel among like-minded men in the "Olympick houses" of the university city of Marburg and at the landgrave's magnificent court at Kassel itself. The landgrave Moritz von Hessen took an interest in Eglin and in 1606 obtained a theological lectureship for him at Marburg University. Eglin specialized in Hermetic subjects, while fellow alchemists Oswald Croll, Johan Thölde, and Benedictus Figulus spread alchemical tracts, such as Figulus's *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony* and Thölde's *Twelve Keys*, attributed to an almost certainly imaginary "fifteenth-century alchemist" named Basil Valentine.

It seems to have been an enjoyable time, because in Eglin's (anonymous) 1614 response to the *Fama*, the *Assertio fraternitatis R.C.,* he hints at an Olympian sanctuary on the river Lahn (Marburg). This phrase was repeated by doctor and alchemist Count Michael Maier in his rules of the Rosicrucian Fraternity, the *Themis aurea* (Golden Themis; 1618), shortly before coming himself to work for Moritz von Hessen as a Paracelsian doctor.

Maier appeared to site the house of the fraternity (*S. Spiritus,* or the House of the Holy Spirit) at a place part real, part symbolic, among "olympick houses" above a river. Maier must, presumably, have seen Marburg as a place where the true spirit of the brotherhood had come alive and found nourishment, at least in the person of the "least of the brothers R.C."

It was also at Marburg that Eglin, under the pseudonym Nicolaus Niger Hapelius, showed his Hermetico-apocalyptic credentials by publishing a commentary on the alchemical prophecy of Elias Artista.

Eglin's *Cheiragogica heliana*—also signed as *Radix ignis elixir* (Elixir for the source of fire)—demonstrated his kinship with other philosophical

alchemists (such as Oswald Croll and the Polish nobleman Michael Sendivogius) who believed in the imminent manifestation of the prophet Elijah, herald of the last times. Elijah, or Elias, was called “Artista” because his imminent return was believed to signify the bequest to humankind of deeper metallurgical and alchemical sciences that would establish the last golden age. Elias Artista was compared to the patriarchal figure of Tubal Cain, father of metalworkers and artists and a figure familiar to this day in the lore of Freemasons.

The Elias Artista prophecy was read in combination with other Paracelsian prophecies concerning the discovery of three treasures in Europe and the emergence of the saving figure called variously the “lion of midnight,” the “lion of septentrion,” or the “lion of the north.” In one letter from Augustus von Anhalt to Carl Widemann, written in 1611, the prince joked to Widemann that he was definitely not the “lion” expected by Protestant alchemists, so anyone thinking on those lines had better look elsewhere! They did. They looked for leadership to Augustus’s two brothers, Ludwig and Christian, both of whom, unlike Augustus, were actively engaged with the political shape of Germany’s future and were prepared to encourage prophetic material that gave force to their political will.

When God chose to make *his* will known in the stars, then almost anything might ensue. Indeed, throughout the period there was gathering excitement—and foreboding—that *something incredible was going to happen*. God would not abandon the faithful remnant. The world was pregnant with great things; they were living in a dawning age. If it looked bad now, greatness was on the horizon.

Mystic Jacob Böhme published his *Aurora* in 1612, announcing a new revelation of divine theosophy. If you found reasons to hope now, you would find your hopes were not large enough, in the times to come. There would be blood, and there would be gold. There would be the cross, and there would be the rose.

But before the rose came the fish.

THE SIGNIFYING FISH

That Eglin’s surname meant, in the Zürich area dialect in which he was

raised, “fish” (*Egli*) may have made the landgrave’s optimistic alchemist even more receptive to the phenomenon of signifying fish. What were these signifying fish?

Christ himself had made much of the image of fish, catching fish and being a fisher of men. The fish had once been a secret symbol to signify “Christian” because the Greek word for fish, *ichthos*, contained the abbreviation of the phrase *iesous christos theos soter:* Jesus Christ, God, Savior. So it would be consistent with God’s system of signs that fish would be employed for their prophetic value. Furthermore, Hermetic philosophy was explicit that Nature herself spoke the language of God through visible signs.

In 1611, Eglin, now Paracelsian doctor to the court of Hesse-Kassel, republished in Marburg a tract he had first published in Zürich in 1598. The *Prophetia Halieutica nova et admiranda* (The new and admirable fishing prophecy) dealt with *ichtigraphia* (fish-writing). In particular, the book addressed the phenomenon of signs discovered on six fish caught in Norway in 1587 and Greifswald in 1596. The marks or signs on the fish were, after close inspection, thought to spell out the hopeful message “The Lamb will defeat them,” “them” being the enemies of the evangelical territories.

Eglin tied in the prophecy with Helisaus Röslin’s astrochronological manuscripts, printed later in 1604 as *Speculum et harmonia mundi* (The mirror and harmony of the world; Lich, Wolfgang Kezel) at the dawn of the Kepler-Röslin controversy over supernovae and great conjunctions. The astronomical signs in fish and firmament were then linked to biblical prophecies:

> Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. (Ezek. 33:1–4)

> And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and

> swear by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. (Dan. 12:7)
>
> And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (Rev. 12:6)

These three prophecies brought together the man of the coast (the fisherman who found the signifying fish), the waters whence the prophecy was delivered, and the Lamb who, though slain, yet lives.

The message was taken as much in a purely political as in a religious or apocalyptic sense. That is why the original dedication of Eglin's book was made to Johann Cassimir of the Palatinate-Zweibrücken. Cassimir was a relative of Duke Carl of Sweden. When the duke became King Carl IX of Sweden, he made overtures—until his death in 1611—with the court of Moritz von Hessen at Kassel, in the hope of forming political alliances with Protestant Germany.

In the republished work, Eglin perceived that the signs on the fish now signified the necessity of orchestrating opposition to the election of Matthias as Holy Roman Emperor in 1611. The reason was simple. His brother Rudolf (who had abdicated) had protected the Protestants of Bohemia (the "Bohemian Brethren") as well as a court full of alchemists and cabalists, whereas Matthias was a committed believer in Counter- Reformation activism; he did not care for science.

The new Marburg edition of Eglin's book was dedicated "to the German people" and to another incarnation of Protestant political and religious hope, Frederick Christian of Denmark. Battle lines were being drawn, and the fabulous story of *frater C.R.* and his invisible fraternity was right in the middle of it.

ALCHEMICAL POLITICS

Landgrave Moritz's court at Kassel frequently entertained discussions about

Protestant political union. Politics and alchemy had long been entwined in Kassel.

In 1589, British magus John Dee had made a gift of twelve Hungarian horses to the landgrave in Kassel before Heinrich Khunrath sought out Dee's company in Bremen on June 17 of that year. The landgrave presented his compliments and good wishes to both the mathematical seer and his revered Protestant queen, who, with God's wind on her side, had wiped out the Spanish Armada the previous year.

Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603. During the following year, Moritz corresponded with Henry of Navarre, king of France, to try to secure a peace alliance that would compromise the encroachments of the Spanish Hapsburgs in the Low Countries (Netherlands). Henri IV, while sympathetic, complained that his abilities to generate Continental settlements in favor of Protestant states were not as great as might be hoped; he had been unable to persuade Lutheran Carl IX of Sweden not to invade Catholic Poland. Sweden's intemperate pugnacity only made harmonious relations between Catholic and Protestant powers more difficult, endangering Protestant peoples still further. Henri IV had a difficult enough task maintaining a tightrope walk in his own country. Nevertheless, the king of France sent his court alchemist, Joseph Duchesne, known as Quercetanus, from Paris to Kassel to discuss the possibilities.

Quercetanus, who had himself experienced religious exile in Basel, took advantage of his stay in Hesse-Kassel to react against Röslin's astro-apocalyptic prophecies. Diplomacy could be affected by such things. That, of course, was what those who promoted the prophetic voice desired. A court masque was held in 1604 to promote the spirit of harmony between Hesse-Kassel and France, ruled by its benevolent and tolerant king. Moritz wrote to the French king of how young noblemen in "rose shaped" livery spread the aroma of political love.

Six years later, hopes for an anti-Hapsburg policy based on a balance of power, where France might guarantee security for Protestants, were dashed when a Catholic monk assassinated the French king by a dagger to the heart in Paris. The monk declared that the king of France was an enemy of the church and regicide was thus justified by God. It had been only five years since a Catholic militant band led by Guido Fawkes had attempted to wipe

out the entire English government and Stuart dynasty by gunpowder in 1605.

The idea of a Catholic conspiracy led by Jesuits and backed up to the hilt by an anti-Christian Rome was uppermost in many minds. And if all this was not bad enough, things were going to get even worse for the Protestant cause. In 1611, the dashing son of King James Stuart of Great Britain, Prince Henry, died suddenly. Henry had been the hope of British and Continental Protestants, since he allied himself with those seeking an activist anti-Hapsburg policy and, it was hoped, had determinative influence over his considerably more cautious father.

King James greatly feared conflict with the Hapsburgs but could hardly ignore completely the cries from both commoners and nobility for aid to Continental Protestants. At the same time that the doctor of the abdicated Rudolf II, Paracelsisan alchemist Count Michael Maier, visited Britain (1612), James announced the betrothal of his daughter, Elizabeth, to the Protestant elector Frederick of the Palatinate.

This news was of considerable significance to the Protestant cause in Germany (and was warmly greeted by an evangelical English parliament as well). Not only was Frederick's heraldic emblem the lion (now joined to the lions of England), but Frederick was the chief lay elector of the Holy Roman Empire. He not only had a vote in appointing the Holy Roman Emperor but, technically, could himself be elected to the office. However, his hostility to the Catholic cause made that impossible, since Holy Roman Emperorship required papal approval. What was not impossible, however, was that the Bohemian Protestants might seek him as their king, in place of Matthias. As king of Bohemia, Matthias had already begun to rescind the religious toleration exercised by his sick and abdicated brother, Rudolf.

This political development probably explains why, in 1612, Michael Maier sent a stunning Christmas card, in the shape of a rose, to James, begging that by his protection, "the Rose may be joyful." The "Rose" almost certainly represented the symbolic presence of the princess Elizabeth, about to be joined—as it happened—to the "cross" of evangelical political union. (Several British poems of the period refer to the princess Elizabeth as a rose in need of protection.)

The marriage held within it the hope of the Protestant cause. Maier was also conversant with the alchemical value of the red and the white rose. The

red rose represents gold, coming from the rays of the sun; the white rose represents alchemical silver, derived from sulfur (*Septimania philosophica* [Philosophy of the week]; Magdeburg, 1620).

We have already explored the connection between the *rosa* or nova of 1604 with apocalyptic prediction. If King James could be expected to protect his daughter, then could he not be expected to protect the cause dear to the heart of her husband-to-be as well? The hope was in vain. As far as James was concerned, it was her new husband's task to protect her and do the sensible thing, not his. If Frederick made trouble for himself with the Hapsburgs, the more fool he. James clung to his policy of maintaining the balance of power, which required dissembling with both sides.

As Maier put the finishing touches to his Christmas card, Adam Haslmayr was about to spend his first winter on the galleys. The stakes were high and getting higher. On June 7, 1613, bells rang out across the river Neckar as the elector Frederick and his new English wife, the learned daughter of the new Solomon, showed themselves to their people as a married couple in the joyous, crowded, beautiful city of Heidelberg. One of the thousands watching the magnificent festivities was a young student, Johann Amos Comensky, a Czech genius about to matriculate at Heidelberg University. He would soon get caught up in the Rosicrucian furor.

The high hopes surrounding the marriage of Frederick and Elizabeth undoubtedly contributed to the political background of the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis* nine months after the Heidelberg celebrations. The marriage was certainly exploitable in the cause of the "lion prophecies," and the *Fama* itself was exploitable in terms of expectations of a new, reformed Protestant order. However, it should be observed that there is no reference whatsoever to the marriage of Frederick and Elizabeth in the first printing of the *Fama*, and the thesis that the two events were somehow entwined in the propaganda of subterranean politicking (with powerful British input) is untenable. (This thesis appears in Frances Yates's influential 1972 book, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. The book stretches circumstantial evidence to the limit).

What we can say is that at the time of the publication of *the Fama Fraternitatis* in March 1614, there was considerable optimism in the air. This optimism was, however, only a rich soufflé spread over a marsh of

foreboding.

THE SPLASH

The *Fama Fraternitatis* appeared before the public in Kassel in 1614, in a first edition printed by Wilhelm Wessell. For those who could read, it was irresistible. News of the publication spread like the proverbial wildfire. Over two hundred hasty handbooks would be published in response to it over the next ten years—an extraordinary figure. The period of the "Rosicrucian furor" engaged the minds of the whole of Protestant, thinking Europe, so much so that historian Frances Yates thought she had uncovered a lost protoscientific movement, a "Rosicrucian Enlightenment" that had shone brightly, only to be suppressed and buried beneath the embers of the Thirty Years' War.

After the war, the movement was apparently resurrected in dismembered form as the seed of scientific revolution (the Royal Society), the seed of social revolution (Freemasonry), and lastly as the seed of spiritual revolution (Pietism, Behmenism, and alchemico-spiritual "Rosicrucianism").

This is a great deal of weight to put on the back of a single publication. Yates seems to have gotten quite caught up in the romantic idea of Europe's destiny being in the hands of a secret society or coterie of secret societies; the idea, of course, comes from the *Fama* itself, a fiction that can be shown to have a curious effect on the reality of those who get deeply involved with it.

Allgemeine vnd *General*
REFORMATION,
Der gantzen weiten Welt.
Beneben der
FAMA FRA-
TERNITATIS,
Deß löblichen Ordens des Ro-
senkreutzes / an alle Gelehrte vnd
Häupter *Europæ* geschrieben:
Auch einer kurtzen RESPONSION,
von dem Herrn Haselmeyer gestellet / welcher
deßwegen von den Jesuitern ist gefänglich ein-
gezogen / vnd auff eine Galleen ge-
schmiedet:
Jetzo öffentlich in Druck verfertiget / vnd allen
trewen Hertzen *communiciret* worden.
Erstlich Gedruckt zu Cassel /
Im Jahr / 1614.

The first printed edition of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, Kassel, Wilhelm Wessel, 1614.
(Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

We are bound to investigate how much, if anything, of all this is true. In any investigation, we begin by endeavoring to discover the principal agent and the motive. Who had the *Fama* printed, and why?

The *Fama* was not printed at the instigation of its author. It is nonetheless poignant that the man whose experiences probably most inspired its author to write it, namely Tobias Hess, would die prematurely, at the age of forty-six, in the year of its publication (November 24, 1614). Could Tobias Hess himself have been involved in the publication?

“Hess listens to God and no one else,” wrote Andreae pointedly in the *Immortality of Hess* (1619)—a statement that has not received the attention it deserves. If Andreae had disapproved of circulation, Hess need have done no more than take note of Andreae’s reservations. But the Rosicrucian movement—if not the *Fama* itself—had many fathers. The manuscript had been like an orphan, gathering foster parents around it from the moment it left Tübingen in 1610. Like its subject, *frater C.R.*, the *Fama* had wandered, an alien in the world, and attracted to itself men who thought they could read its signs. It was only a matter of time before someone pirated it.

During the 1980s, Carlos Gilly located documents concerning the trial of Heinrich Nollius at Giessen University in 1623. One of the witnesses at the trial was a friend of Benedictus Figulus, one Johann Müller, an alchemist and professor of mathematics at Giessen who was known to visit Tübingen on occasion.[2] In his confession at Nollius's trial, he stated that it was he who had taken the manuscript of the *Fama* to the printers in Kassel. This information, however, is not certain.

One might naturally think that the man who brought the manuscript to Wessell's print shop would have been Raphael Eglin, who surely saw its value to his cause. However, Carlos Gilly also discovered a letter wherein Eglin explained to Landgrave Moritz von Hessen that a work he had put before Wessell to print had been delayed due to Wessell working on the *Fama*, even though Eglin had put his work in two months before Wessell received the *Fama*. Eglin obviously knew the *Fama* was going to be printed.

Augustus von Anhalt was a correspondent of Moritz of Hesse-Kassel. Is it not possible that the publication came about as a result of their mutual Hermetic interests? Furthermore, Augustus von Anhalt and Carl Widemann may have wished to advertise the fate that had befallen their colleague Adam Haslmayr—and for what he was suffering. Furthermore, we know they were trying to get a copy of the *Confessio Fraternitatis:* might not printing the *Fama* smoke out the brotherhood and force its hand into revealing the promised sequel?

In fact, it is highly unlikely that Augustus was behind the printing of the *Fama*, since it is obvious from a letter to Carl Widemann of May 2, 1614, that he had scant knowledge of the circumstances at Kassel at the time. Augustus wrote to Widemann, "I've had so much written to me [about the *Confessio*] that I don't know how to write about it. The *Fama* is said to have been printed in Kassel with Haslmayr's *Antwort*, but I haven't learnt if the *Antwort* was included."

The *Fama* did not come into the world naked, but was clothed with additional signifiers. Something of the motives behind the publication might be gleaned from the original contents of the first printing.

On the title page of the first edition, the first words announced nothing less than "the Universal and general Reformation of the whole wide World." That was the title of the first work in this collection. This title was then followed

by the advertisement for “Fama Fraternitatis, concerning the commendable Order of *Rosenkreutzes*, written to all the Learned and Heads of Europe.” After that came the inclusion of the Responsion from Herrn Haselmeyer, lately sentenced to the galleys by the Jesuits. New books seldom come with such explosive contents as that! People were expecting something amazing to happen. Was this it?

The universal and general reformation of the whole wide world was indeed an Olympian promise, but what was “the Universal and general Reformation of the whole wide World” doing above the *Fama Fraternitatis?* Perhaps somebody had noticed that the text of the Fama itself promised “a general reformation, both of divine and human things, according to our desire, and the expectation of others.” It so happened that something very similar was announced in a work also published in Kassel by Wessell in 1614. This work, *The General Reformation of the Whole World*, was the same work as that printed with the *Fama*.

The General Reformation of the Whole World was a chapter written by Venetian liberal Traiano Boccalini from his much larger satire entitled *Advertisements* [or *News*] *from Parnassus*, published in Milan in the same year. Parnassus was the mountain of the poets, the Olympus of inspiration, and a natural utopia. Boccalini himself had died the previous year, three years after his hero, the lamented Henri IV, king of France.

Boccalini’s book was hot entertainment for learned people familiar with the plight of the liberal Republic of Venice, then under threat from both the Hapsburgs and the papacy. Venice was the place where Galileo was being spied on by the Inquisition. Contacts between Venice and Tübingen were good. Andreae’s friends Tobias Adami and Wilhelm von der Wense were both interested in radical Italian literature, and visited imprisoned Hermetic revolutionary Tommaso Campanella, incarcerated by the Inquisition in legal harmony with the Hapsburg-dominated civil powers in Calabria.

Boccalini’s satire on universal reformation is in part a comment on the Council of Trent (1563), which had officially intended to heal religious divisions in Europe but in fact served only to bolster the Catholic hegemony and provide the basis for further religious war. In the seventyseventh chapter of *Advertisements from Parnasssus*, Boccalini imagines a council of the gods and the wise on Mount Parnassus assembling under Apollo’s call to resolve

the conflicts inherent in humankind. There's something wrong with the times. Many ideas are put forward—some of them of a radical nature (the abolition of capitalism, for example). All are dismissed as unworkable or spectacularly dangerous and absurd. Try to change one thing here, and something else goes wrong there. It is generally concluded that if there were more love among people, many problems would be ameliorated (a theme of the *Fama*). This does not seem a remedy that the masses at the foot of the mountain wish to hear, so it is finally announced to the vulgar *demos* that the prices of certain foodstuffs will be lowered. There is widespread rejoicing. The wisdom of the wise is justified!

This fabulous little tale (of no small value today) was translated by Andreae's colleague at Tübingen, Wilhelm Bidenbach, and was a work much admired by Christoph Besold, a man who was to show a certain weariness with the world characteristic of the resignation inherent in Boccalini's brave satire. (Besold would convert to Roman Catholicism in 1622; Andreae said, "A longtime wanderer got snatched away by the wind.")

It has to be said that whoever put the Boccalini material next to the *Fama* was very astute, perhaps too much so. There can be no doubt that had the *Fama* been read through the enlightened allegorical and satirical lenses of the "Universal and general Reformation of the whole wide World," much confusion could have been avoided. But with an irony that Boccalini himself —and Andreae too—would have appreciated, the very mention of the universal and general reformation was immediately applied in the most optimistic sense to the *Fama Fraternitatis*. It never pays to underestimate the naïveté and stupidity of the human race.

What begins as a joke may become a religion.

So, was Bidenbach or Besold involved with the publication of the *Fama*? It seems highly unlikely. They were not connected to the Hesse- Kassel printing operation. All of Besold's books of the period were published either in Tübingen or in Strasbourg (by Lazarus Zetzner). Why did Andreae come to call Figulus a cheat or betrayer (*Betrüger*)? Had Figulus purloined manuscripts from Tübingen?

Andreae also called Figulus a "globetrotter" (literally, a "world circumnavigator"). Could this have been a reference to his taking things far away? Andreae never had anything to do with Kassel or Marburg, as far as

we know. It is certain, however, that a copy of the *Fama* was in Hesse-Kassel a year before it was printed, because Marburg University's professor of philosophy, Johannes Combach, published a response to it in March 1613 (*Metaphysicorum liber singularis* [Peculiar book of the metaphysicians, with a preface addressed "*ad Fraternitatem R:C:*"]; Rudolf Hutwelcker, Marburg, 1613). Combach's copy could have come from his university colleague Eglin, or from Figulus. If Figulus had a copy (from Haslmayr) in January 1611, it would not have been difficult for Figulus to get a copy to Marburg before his eventual arrest at the end of 1612.

THE SECOND-KNOWN PRINTED RESPONSE TO THE MANUSCRIPT *FAMA FRATERNITATIS*

Johann Combach, from Wetter, like the alchemist Oswald Croll (ca. 1560–1608), was the kind of academic from whom one might have thought Andreae would like to have heard. Indeed, his response might be considered almost ideal if, in fact, the *Fama* was intended to garner sound intellectual responses to a proposed reformation of learning. Combach was no bloodshot mystic penetrating the sunlit groves of living nature. He was a sound, regular professor of philosophy at Marburg, lately returned from a stimulating sojourn as a visiting professor at Oxford. His book, with its preface addressed to the R.C. fraternity, was in fact a schoolbook of conservative, Aristotelian learning, dedicated to John Prideaux, rector of Exeter College, Oxford; it is now extremely rare.

The book takes for its sources not only famous philosophical names such as Aristotle and the Muslim skeptical metaphysician Averroës but also an array of luminaries of pre-Renaissance medieval Scholasticism. In his preface, Combach laments that he knows well enough the weakness of the sciences, but in the end he had to bury his own misgivings and desire for reform beneath the demands of other, mundane business. The result was a kind of depressive, scientific misery: seeing the problems but feeling powerless to do anything about them.

The promised reform of scientific knowledge was thus for him a cause of real joy, and he hoped to learn more of the brotherhood. As Carlos Gilly remarked of this exceptionally clear-minded response, it certainly proves that

the *Fama*'s distribution had found an intelligent reader a full year before the appearance of the first edition.

Andreae should have been delighted. Was he? We cannot tell. Did Combach receive any kind of answer? We do not know, but in view of the whole story, we may doubt it. This raises questions about Andreae's integrity if he approved, actively or otherwise, the distribution of the *Fama*.

However, it is worth considering the possibility that Hess may have said to Andreae something on the lines of, "You may not know what to do with this document, but I do. I'll see it put to good use! You may have your doubts, but I can work wonders with this!"

Pure conjecture, of course, but then again, the evidence does not really give us the kind of confidence that emerges in Gilly's somewhat constrained treatment of his fascinating and hard-sought discoveries. One wonders what a forensic detective would make of the material.

Andreae, the man of pristine truth, was quite prepared to mislead the public into believing things that he knew were not true, such as the issue of who wrote the *Theca gladii spiritus*. Why should we take his word concerning any issue of authorship? The man clearly had a problem with the idea of honest and full disclosure. Was there more to his relationship with Hess than met the eye? Why did he say that he loved Hess more than his own wife?

Tolerance for the *Fama* at Marburg University did not last forever. For some reason, Moritz von Hessen appeared to turn against the Rosicrucian cause in 1619. We shall need, in due course, to suggest why this may have been. As it is, it is surprising, since Moritz was a patron of much that the *Fama* was taken by its supporters to encourage.

In 1619, at the landgrave's order, the first inquisitorial trial took place to investigate Rosicrucian enthusiasm in Marburg. The unhappy destiny of the enthusiasts Homagius and Zimmerman (referred to earlier) was reflected in the fact that the second expanded edition of Combach's metaphysical work (1620) appeared *without* the dedicatory preface to the *fratres R.C.* However, in spite of what might appear in retrospect to have been lily-livered behavior on Combach's part, it was in fact he, and not Eglin, who not only disapproved of the inquisitorial trial, but supported the accused students as well.

It was stated in the court transcripts that “some strange judgements have been delivered. One [witness] wants to have them [the students] dead, one free, another in prison. One of them, Combach by name, professor of Logic, said to the tribunal that he considered them in all they do and teach driven by God.” Combach was completely in agreement with them and waited only for God’s call that he would do as they did, and more yet if the call came. This little detail of the story of the first Rosicrucians is undoubtedly impressive; and in its light, one might wonder whether Marburg’s outspoken professor of Logic might himself have had a hand in the publication of the *Fama*.

THE MOTIVE FOR PUBLISHING THE *FAMA FRATERNITATIS*

Taken as a whole, however, the most likely interest in the combination of Boccalini, *Fama*, and Haslmayr on the title page of the first edition was a political one. Boccalini represented resistance to a Catholic threat to liberty and good sense. Haslmayr’s story showed up the evil of the Jesuits. The *Fama* promised a fabulous future.

Susanna Åkerman is of the view that the joining of the lion prophecy (included in Haslmayr’s *Responsion* or *Antwort* of 1612) to the first edition of the *Fama* was related to Ludwig and Christian of Anhalt’s political schemes. They hoped to form a closer, reforming Protestant union, built on the timely marriage of the English princess to the elector Frederick of the Palatinate. There is no doubt that paranoia about Jesuit activity was a key component of the printing of the *Fama*, against which was posited Haslmayr’s declaration that the Fraternity R.C. constituted the true “Society of Jesus.” This point was then demonstrated for all to see in the account of the fate that befell Adam Haslmayr himself.

> See here! This good man, Adam Haslmayr! Sent to the Galleys! Why? What does it all portend? What can we do? Think about it! This brave whistle-blower: silenced by the Jesuits—and what does that prove, brothers?

We should not underestimate the power of the advertisement concerning

Haslmayr. Haslmayr was clearly presented as innocent. Readers could read what he wrote and judge for themselves whether he deserved being chained up far from his family and friends in Spanish-dominated Italy.

Eglin may not have been the person who put the *Fama* into Wessel's printing shop, but he certainly would have supported the effort. He was as involved in the political implications of the lion prophecies as Haslmayr was. The prophecies had the backing of their master Paracelsus (the prophecy of the avenging lion had first appeared in Paracelsus's *Liber mineralibus*, a manuscript of about 1540 published in 1588 and thereafter embellished by others).

Haslmayr's use of the lion prophecies in his *Antwort* of 1612 (reprinted in the *Fama* edition of 1614) may have been the most significant reason for including Haslmayr's work. Furthermore, Eglin had himself known Haslmayr since 1607. He may have been concerned for his release. It is by no means impossible that it was in fact Adam Haslmayr who got a message through to one of Figulus's contacts to print his copy of the manuscript. Such an instruction would have been dramatically consistent with Helisaus Röslin's astronomical predictions written under the title *Speculum et harmonia mundi*. First worked out some thirty-four years before and published in a pirated edition at Amersbach in 1605, Röslin's influential book included material from Kepler's treatise on the new star of 1604.

In Röslin's calculations for the beginning of the seventh age, 1613 (the year of Frederick and Elizabeth's marriage) was deemed a year of great change, while the series of significant sequences built up by Röslin through an analysis of great conjunctions, comets, and terrestrial events such as the sequence of German emperors and French kings all pointed to the year of culmination, 1614.

What better time to launch the seventh age than the spring of 1614? The invisible brotherhood must reveal itself to the world! Haslmayr was its prophet; that was why he was suffering on the galleys. And yet, in the rush to respond to the epoch-marking announcement of the *Fama Fraternitatis* (it was surely believed that the fraternity itself was responsible for the publication of their intents), poor Haslmayr's real significance got lost altogether. The clamor to encounter the invisible Rose Cross Brothers was quickly deemed the first matter of importance. Yet Haslmayr himself would

really have been a very good person to ask as to their whereabouts, since he was the first-known person to have gone on such a quest.

However, in 1614, it is most likely that the pointed reference to the Jesuits on the title page of the first edition would have garnered greater attention than the fate of one unfortunate Austrian gentleman. The activities of the Jesuits were, at the time, a political and social hot potato.

JESUIT CONSPIRACY

Within twenty-five years of the death of the Jesuits' founder, Ignatius Loyola, in 1556, a rapidly expanding educational program had secured Jesuit domination of 150 schools, staffed by members of the order. The Society of Jesus (a bitterly ironic name as far as its enemies were concerned) expanded rapidly through the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, leading to accusations that, privy to confessional secrets of the mighty, members manipulated matters of political influence and wealth acquisition.

In 1614—the same year as the public release of the *Fama*—the socalled Black Legend abut the Jesuits' secret aims formed the basis for the forged *Monita secreta* (Secret warning), published anonymously in Cracow. This immensely popular pamphlet went through no fewer than eighteen editions before the end of the century.

Two separate announcements concerning two allegedly holy orders made in the same year posed a natural question. Who *was* secretly managing European destiny? Was it the Catholic Jesuits, or the (possibly) Protestant Brothers of the Rose Cross? Which was the true Society of Jesus?

Would the invisible fraternity stand up and confess?

EIGHT

THE CONFESSION OF THE FRATERNITY

That Eglin's anonymous *Assertio fraternitatis RC* (Frankfurt, Johann Bringer, 1614) contained the telling self-description of its author as "the least of the Brothers R.C." meant not only that his eyes had seen what they had seen, and that he was thus "theirs," but also, presumably, that he could be counted on to advance their cause by humble service. This humble service appears to have involved publishing their work, apparently without permission.

Raphael Eglin had, by 1615, gotten hold of a copy of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, the second so-called Rosicrucian Manifesto. The provenance of the manuscript may not have been as mysterious as that of the *Fama*.

Given that the first-known record of someone attempting to acquire the manuscript of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* concerned none other than the (in 1612) disappointed Augustus von Anhalt, it is fitting that the first record of its having been seen by anyone also concerns the determined prince. A letter of September 5, 1614—six months after the publication of the *Fama*—shows that Augustus had at last managed to obtain the Latin version of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*—a copy that had formerly belonged to one designated as "MLH," whom Gilly reckons might mean Medicus Landgravii Hessae (possibly Eglin), but which might just as well mean Moritz Landgrave von Hessen.

Were it not for the fact that, as we have seen, passages from the *Confessio Fraternitatis* appear in a highly Christian spiritual context in Andreae's *Theca gladii spiritus* (Strasbourg, 1616)—a work its anonymous author states came as a response to Tobias Hess's pious thoughts—one might be tempted

to think the *Confessio Fraternitatis* was the work of Eglin, or of a coterie that included him.

Unlike the *Fama*, the original work is in Latin, and, as we shall see, carries a markedly different tone to the *Fama*. It seems hurried, sometimes obtuse, even manufactured for an occasion, rather than the product of creative ease.

> The Confession of the Laudable Fraternity of the Most Honorable Order of the Rosy Cross, Written to All the Learned of Europe
>
> Whatsoever is published, and made known to everyone, concerning our Fraternity, by the foresaid *Fama*, let no man esteem lightly of it, nor hold it as an idle or invented thing, and much less receive the same, as though it were only a mere conceit of ours. It is the Lord Jehovah (who seeing the Lord's Sabbath is almost at hand, and hastened again, his period or course being finished, to his first beginning) doth turn about the course of Nature; and what heretofore hath been sought with great pains, and daily labour, is now manifested unto those who make small account, or scarcely once think upon it; but those which desire it, it is in a manner forced and thrust upon them, that thereby the life of the godly may be eased of all their toil and labour, and be no more subject to the storms of inconstant Fortune; but the wickedness of the ungodly thereby, with their due and deserved punishment, be augmented and multiplied.
>
> Although we cannot be by any suspected of the least heresy, or of any wicked beginning, or purpose against the worldly government, we do condemn the East and the West (meaning the Pope and Mahomet) blasphemers against our Lord Jesus Christ, and offer and present with a good will to the chief head of the Roman Empire our prayers, secrets, and great treasures of gold.

The *Confessio Fraternitatis* straightaway thrusts us out of the optimistic territory of the *Fama* and plunges us into the Jehovistic scenario of judgment and the end of the world, a world in which scores must be settled. The equation of the papacy with the prophet of Islam would of course have been shocking to Roman Catholics and Muslims alike; there is no ecumenism here or the promise of anything like it. This is a high-Protestant point of view, and

the work is an essentially apocalyptic one.

If Andreae's creative outlook may be discerned in parts, it is hard to believe that this work came straight out of his pen; the wisdom of "Damcar" has all but vanished. When Damcar does make a token reappearance, it is in a political and apocalyptic context. It is noteworthy that while the fraternity is in a sovereign position to condemn both East and West, it yet claims to have no purpose against the "worldly government," offering good will and assistance to the Holy Roman Emperor. In the context, this generosity might be considered to be provisional!

The fraternity has its own purpose and, presumably, a political as well as educational program.

> Yet we have thought good, and fit for the learned's sakes, to add somewhat more to this, and make a better explanation if there be anything too deep, hidden, and set down over dark in the *Fama*, or for certain reasons were altogether omitted, and left out; hoping herewith the learned will be more addicted unto us, and be made far more fit and willing for our purpose.
>
> Concerning the alteration and amendment of Philosophy, we have (as much as this present is needful) sufficiently declared, to wit, that the same is altogether weak and faulty; yet we doubt not, although the most part falsely do allege that she (I know not how) is sound and strong, yet notwithstanding she fetches her last breath and is departing.
>
> But as commonly, even in the same place or country where there breaketh forth a new a unaccustomed disease, Nature also there discovereth a medicine against the same; so there doth appear for so manifold infirmities of Philosophy the right means, and unto our *Patria* sufficiently offered, whereby she may become sound again, which is now to be renewed and altogether new.
>
> No other Philosophy we have, than that which is the head and sum, the foundations and contents of all faculties, sciences, and arts, the which (if we will behold our age) containeth much of Theology and medicine, but little of the wisdom of the law, and doth diligently search both heaven and earth: or, to speak briefly thereof, which doth manifest and declare sufficiently Man, whereof all learned who will make themselves known

> unto us, and come into our brotherhood, shall find more wonderful secrets by us than heretofore they did attain unto, and did know, or are able to believe or utter.

The phrase concerning theology and medicine "but little of the wisdom of the law" sounds like a pencil sketch of the career of Tobias Hess, and the expression also occurs, as we have seen, in the *Theca gladii spiritus*, published in 1616. Scholar Roland Edighoffer is convinced that the *Confessio Fraternitatis* was conceived and directed by Hess, whereafter its more congenial theological contents were reset in the *Theca* (Spirit of the sheathed sword) by Andreae.

The sword of apocalyptic judgment was certainly sheathed in the *Theca*, possibly a reaction to the unsheathed, eschatalogical blade of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*.

> Wherefore, to declare briefly our meaning hereof, we ought to labour carefully that there be not only a wondering at our meeting and adhortation, but that likewise everyone may know, that although we do not lightly esteem and regard such mysteries and secrets, we nevertheless hold it fit, that the knowledge thereof be manifested and revealed to many.
>
> For it is to be taught and believed, that this our unhoped (for), willing offer will raise many and divers thoughts in men, unto whom (as yet) be unknown *Miranda sexta aetatis*, or those which by reason of the course of the world, esteem the things to come like unto the present, and are hindered through all manner of importunities of this our time, so that they live no otherwise in the world, than blind fools, who can, in the clear sunshine day discern and know nothing, than only by feeling.

Miranda sexta aetatis means the "wonders of the sixth period" and puts us squarely in the apocalyptic foretelling territory of Calabrian abbot Joachim di Fiore (1132–1202), an immensely influential seer whose ideas about biblical chronology and millenarianism may be found not only in the esoteric traditions represented by Postel, Röslin, Studion, Hess, and many others, but also in the works of orthodox commentators such as Martin Luther.

To decrypt the signs of the times, the *Confessio Fraternitatis* suggests readers will require more than ordinary vision, for the "blind fools" cannot see even in broad daylight, being altogether governed by emotion, not the divine light. They will need superior vision, *gnosis*, the ability to read the exoteric text esoterically. This is only given to those who have received divine grace, even though the fraternity would wish such knowledge to be the possession of many.

Luther wrote in his "Calculation of the Age of the World" of how the world would last six thousand years, of which two thousand were "vacuous," two thousand were governed by the law (of Moses), followed by two thousand under the Messiah. There are six days of the divine week, before the seventh day, which is "the eternal sabbath." "The evening of the Sabbath corresponds to the year 5,000, at which, must succeed, before the end of the sixth millennium, the luminous morning." This "luminous morning" is elsewhere compared to the phenomenon of the Aurora's wondrous light across the sky.

What is coming will not be like what has passed.

> Now concerning the first part, we hold this, that the meditations, knowledge and inventions of our loving Christian Father (of all that, which from the beginning of the world, Man's wisdom, either through God's revelation, or through the service of the angels and spirits, or through the sharpness and depth of understanding, or through long observation, use, and experience, hath found out, invented, brought forth, corrected, and till now hath been propagated and transplanted) are so excellent, worthy and great, that if all books should perish, and by God's almighty sufferance, all writings and all learning should be lost, yet the posterity will be able only thereby to lay a new foundation, and bring truth to light again; the which perhaps would not be so hard to do as if one should begin to pull down and destroy the old ruinous building, and then to enlarge the fore court, afterwards bring lights into the lodgings, and then change the doors, stair, and other things according to our intention.
>
> But to whom would not this be acceptable, for to be manifested to everyone rather that to have it kept and spared, as an especial ornament

for the appointed time to come?

> Wherefore should we not with all our hearts rest and remain in the only truth (which men through so many erroneous and crooked ways do seek) if it had only pleased God to lighten unto us the sixth *Candelabrium*? Were it not good that we needed not to care, not to fear hunger, poverty, sickness and age?

The old system will need complete renovation; the knowledge contained in the discovered tomb of Father C.R. will provide the means. This gives the fraternity a crucial role in the establishment of the new age, a divine fiat.

The reference to the lighting of the sixth candelabrum shows how the author's thought is working within the conceptions of Joachim di Fiore in combination with the book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, which is also concerned with the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth: a divine construction. This takes the promise of the *Fama* onto another level entirely. Father C.R. is now an apocalyptic social, political, and religious architect who has gone back to the source of knowledge, ignored in the West and secreted in the East (reference to which has, notably, been suppressed or ignored in the *Confessio Fraternitatis*), ready to remake the world after, as it were, the Deluge—or inevitable decay of the old system.

Knowledge of the Joachimite system was easy enough to come by at the time since most of the abbot's works were printed in the sixteenth century; readers could learn of the three successive periods after the Creation.

The first period was inaugurated by Adam and confirmed by Moses and the Patriarchs. The second began with the revelation of Jesus Christ. The third period was still to come and would be marked by the return of Elias (the prophet Elijah, who had last been seen heading heavenward in a fiery chariot). This third period, the age of the Holy Spirit, would be the time of the sacred nuptials, when the church would experience the *hieros gamos* (sacred marriage) with her celestial betrothed, Christ. This third period was also called the time of the Eternal Gospel, a time characterized not by the appearance of a new book but by the spiritual perception of the Bible. This same spiritual intelligence would also be brought to bear on the world of nature: the divine Word, or creative mind, would be found in both, in pristine, illuminated form: faith will pass into knowledge, knowledge into love.

Joachim posited seven periods of the cosmic (world) week. Five of these had passed in the era of the Hebrew scriptures, or Old Testament; these five constituted the first age. The second age (as with Luther) was ruled by the Messiah. The third age (*tertius status*)—the Age of the Eternal Gospel—would begin when the breaking of the sixth seal of the Apocalypse was complete and the sixth candelabrum was lit.

The light of the sixth candelabrum would provide those with the insight to see the "miranda" or wonders of the age, a golden age of paradisal happiness and peace before the last judgment. This reign (or *Reich*) would last for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1–2, 6). The *fratres R.C.* would have the privilege of lighting the sixth candelabrum, bringing in its train the gifts of longevity, health, wealth, omniscience, ubiquity, and fundamental governance of the world.

This latter point should not be underestimated, as it is so often by more-spiritual commentaries. The activities of Adam Weishaupt's revolutionary Illuminati in the late eighteenth century took the *Confessio Fraternitatis*'s idea of a secret order that would overthrow perceived tyrannies as a model for political action. In the following century, Weishaupt's revolutionary methods were given a pseudognosis of economic theory and aped by the communist factions that secularized Joachim's three great ages by following Hegel's tripartite philosophical scheme of thesis-antithesis-synthesis.

According to left-wing interpreters of Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872), when the antithesis of capital (rule) and labor (ruled) was resolved in a "higher" synthesis, revolutionary bliss would result as proletarian selves willingly (or otherwise) surrendered to harmonious collective identity and selfless joy. This could only be achieved by covert means and alleged superior insight, backed by egg-crackers.

The vision of paradise in the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, on the other hand, conforms to the wish-fantasies of individuals brought to their highest spiritual and physical development:

> Were it not a precious thing, that you could always live so, as if you had lived from the beginning of the world, and, moreover, as you should still live to the end thereof? Were it not excellent you dwell in one place, that neither the people which dwell beyond the River Ganges in the Indies

could Hide anything, nor those which in Peru might be able to keep secret their counsels from thee?

Were it not a precious thing, that you could so read in one only book, and withal by reading understand and remember, all that which in all other books (which heretofore have been, and are now, and hereafter shall come out) hath been, is, and shall be learned and found out of them?

How pleasant were it, that you could so sing, that instead of stony rocks you could draw the pearls and precious stones, instead of wild beasts, spirits, and instead of hellish Pluto, move the mighty princes of the world?

O ye people, God's counsel is far otherwise, who hath concluded now to increase and enlarge the number of our Fraternity, the which we with such joy have undertaken, as we have heretofore obtained this great treasure without our merits, yea without our hopes, and thoughts, and purpose with the like fidelity to put the same in practice, that neither the compassion nor pity of our own children (which some of us in the Fraternity have) shall draw us from it, because we know these unhoped for goods cannot be inherited, nor by chance be obtained.

If there be somebody now, which on the other side will complain of our discretion, that we offer our treasure so freely, and without any difference to all men, and do not rather regard and respect more the godly, learned, wise, or princely persons, than the common people; those we do not contradict, seeing it is not a slight and easy matter; but withal we signify so much, that our *Arcana* or secrets will no ways be common, and generally made known. Although the *Fama* be set forth in five languages, and is manifested to everyone, yet we do partly very well know that the unlearned and gross wits will not receive nor regard the same; as also the worthiness of those who shall be accepted into our Fraternity are not esteemed and known of us by Man's carefulness, but by the Rule of our Revelation and Manifestation. Wherefore if the unworthy cry and call a thousand times, or if they shall offer and present themselves to us a thousand times, yet God hath commanded our ears, that they should hear none of them: yea God hath so compassed us about with his clouds, that unto us his servants no violence or force can be done or committed; wherefore we neither can be seen or known by anybody, except he had

> the eyes of an eagle. It hath been necessary that the *Fama* be set forth in everyone's mother tongue, because those should not be defrauded of the knowledge thereof, whom (although they be unlearned) God hath not excluded from the happiness of this Fraternity, the which shall be divided and parted into certain degrees; as those which dwell in the city of Damcar in Arabia, who have a far different political order from the other Arabians. For there do govern only wise and understanding men, who by the king's permission make particular laws; according unto which example also the government shall be instituted in Europe (whereof we have a description set down by our Christianly Father) when first is done and come to pass that which is to precede. And thenceforth our Trumpet shall publicly sound with a loud sound, and great noise, when namely the same (which at this present is shown by few, and is secretly, as a thing to come, declared in figures and pictures) shall be free and publicly proclaimed, and the whole world shall be filled withal. Even in such manner as heretofore, many godly people have secretly and altogether desperately pushed at the Pope's tyranny, which afterwards, with great, earnest, and especial zeal in Germany, was thrown from his seat, and trodden underfoot, whose final fall is delayed, and kept for our times, when he also shall be scratched in pieces with nails, and an end be made of his ass's cry, by a new voice. The which we know is already reasonably manifest and known to many learned men in Germany, as their writings and secret congratulations do sufficiently witness the same.

The references to the pope's imminent demise may seem harsh to many ears today, but the early seventeenth century saw a papacy functioning as a concrete political force of repression with powers over life and limb, both open (the Spanish Hapsburgs' violent suppression of Protestants) and covert (the Jesuits and the secret service that brought information to the Inquisition).

No one who had suffered under the sharpest edge of the Counter-Reformation would think for a moment that the papacy would be willing to join a pansophic enlightenment enterprise that guaranteed freedom of religious confession and a search for truth in nature. The Catholic Church in its government stood foursquare against any such outbreaks of liberty of thought and conscience.

The imminence of, and language describing, the downfall of papal power demonstrates a clear line of intellectual commerce with Simon Studion's *Naometria*, and therefore with Tobias Hess, who assisted Studion and was attacked for it by the senate of the University of Tübingen.

> We could here relate and declare what all the time, from the year of Our Lord 1378 (in which year our Christian Father was born) till now, hath happened, where we might rehearse what alterations he hath seen in these one hundred and six years of his life, which he hath left to our brethren and us after his decease to peruse. But brevity, which we do observe, will not permit at this present to make rehearsal of it, till a more fit time. At this time it is enough for those which do not despise our declaration, having therefore briefly touched it, thereby to prepare the way for their acquaintance and friendship with us.
>
> Yet to whom it is permitted that he may see, and for his instruction use, those great letters and characters which the Lord god hath written and imprinted in heaven and earth's edifice, through the alteration of government, which hath been from time to time altered and reviewed, the same is already (although as yet unknown to himself) ours. And as we know he will not despise our inviting and calling, so none shall fear any deceit, for we promise and openly say, that no man's uprightness and hopes shall deceive him, whosoever shall make himself known unto us under the seal of secrecy, and desire our Fraternity.

The fraternity is ambivalent. On the one hand, it is, by releasing its intentions, revealing itself. On the other, it remains invisible to the blind eyes of the world. One is reminded of St. Paul's exclamation that the Christian's "life is hid in Christ in God." Those who knew likewise would instantly sense a communication with the apparently transcendent fraternity that, while in spiritual communion, remained invisible and—what a relief!—stood untouched by the evil machinations of the wicked world.

In a sense, then, those closest to these writings were thus bound never to admit their part. It would be miserable indeed to break by will the power of such a conception, for the simple reason that the fiction of the fraternity had somehow touched something immensely real and powerful both in

themselves and in the soul of sympathizers.

Even Andreae himself, who, as we shall see, was made angry by much of what came as a result of publication, never surrendered entirely the citadel of his creation. Perhaps, in a sense, though he tried to shape people's perceptions of truth by references to the weaknesses of a literal interpretation of the fiction, he knew in himself that he had been party to creating something more powerful than himself—that is to say, something that was not entirely his creation.

> But to the false hypocrites, and to those that seek other things than wisdom, we say and witness by these presents publicly, we cannot be made known, and be betrayed unto them; and much less they shall be able to hurt us any manner of way without the will of God; but they shall certainly be partakers of all the punishment spoken of in our *Fama*; so their wicked counsels shall light upon themselves, and our treasures shall remain untouched and unstirred, until the Lion doth come, who will ask them for his use, and employ them for the confirmation and establishment of his kingdom.

It is possible that the reference to the Lion was added by friends of Haslmayr. The joining of the lion and the treasure prophecies (a 1605 French prophecy pseudonymously attributed to Paracelsus spoke of three treasures being discovered after Paracelsus's "return"; one in France) certainly ties the *Confessio Fraternitatis* tightly to Haslmayr's Theophrastian *Antwort*, published the previous year.

Eglin took astrochronology seriously. Two years after the first publication of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, a new edition that combined the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*, published in Frankfurt, inserted an additional phrase to the words "an end be made of his ass's cry, a new voice" (see page 201). The passage now read: "The end shall be made of his ass's cry by the new voice of a roaring Lion." This addition transformed a polemic into a prophecy. The 1617 edition of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis* was printed by Johann Bringer; Bringer had also printed Eglin's anonymous *Assertio fraternitatis* R.C. in 1614.

Whatever allegiance the fraternity might have owed to the Holy Roman

Emperor, *his* allegiance would need to be given to the Lion, lest he face defeat and destruction.

> We ought therefore here to observe well, and make it known unto everyone, that God hath certainly and most assuredly concluded to send and grant to the world before her end, which presently thereupon shall ensue, such a truth, light, life, and glory, as the first man Adam had, which he lost in Paradise, after which his successors were put and driven, with him, to misery. Wherefore there shall cease all servitude, falsehood, lies, and darkness, which by little and little, with the great world's revolution, was crept into all arts, works, and governments of men, and have darkened the most part of them. For from thence are proceeded an innumerable sort of all manner of false opinions and heresies, that scarce the wisest of all was able to know whose doctrine and opinion he should follow and embrace, and could not well and easily be discerned; seeing on the one part they were detained, hindered, and brought into errors through the respect of the philosophers and learned men, and on the other part through true experience. All the which, when it shall once be abolished and removed, and instead thereof a right and true rule instituted, then there will remain thanks unto them which have taken pains therein. But the work itself shall be attributed to the blessedness of our age.
>
> As we now willingly confess, that many principal men by their writings will be a great furtherance unto this Reformation which is to come; so we desire not to have this honour ascribed to us, as if such work were only commanded and imposed upon us. But we confess, and witness openly with the Lord Jesus Christ, that it shall first happen that the stones shall arise, and offer their service, before there shall be any want of executors and accomplishers of God's counsel; yea, the Lord God hath already sent before certain messengers, which should testify his will, to wit, some new stars, which do appear and are seen in the firmament in *Serpentario* and *Cygno*, which signify and give themselves known to everyone, that they are powerful *Signacula* of great weighty matters. So then, the secret his writings and characters are most necessary for all such things which are found out by men. Although that great book of nature stands open to all

> men, yet there are but few that can read and understand the same. For as there is given to man two instruments to hear, likewise two to see, and two to smell, but only one to speak, and it were but vain to expect speech from the ears, or hearing from the eyes. So there hath been ages or times which have seen, there have also been ages that have heard, smelt, and tasted. Now there remains yet that which in short time, honour shall be likewise given to the tongue, and by the same; what before times hath been seen, heard, and smelt, now finally shall be spoken and uttered forth, when the World shall awake out of her heavy and drowsy sleep, and with an open heart, bare-head, and bare-foot, shall merrily and joyfully meet the new arising Sun.

The "starry messengers" (to borrow a phrase from Galileo's work of 1610) of 1604 are now fully integrated into the prophetic revelation of a new "age of the tongue."

This power to speak forth what had once only been imagined or intuited not only alludes to the gifts of the apostles (tongues) consistent with fullness of Holy Spirit, but harks back to the paradisal possessions of Adam.

Patriarachs Adam, Seth, and Enoch had the "Adamic language" or "magical language" that so fascinated the magi of the time—an echo of which we see in the popular entertainment *Dr. Dolittle*, the magic of whose hero lies in his ability to talk to the animals. Dolittle is, of course, an innocent in the world, accessible—like the kingdom of heaven—to children.

The Adamic language not only enabled Adam to call forth by name all living things in the Garden, but also gave Enoch the power to speak to the angels. The fraternity can decrypt the divine discourse of nature, through ability to read its signs, signature, and grammar.

It is little surprise that John Dee, later in the century, would come to be seen as a Rosicrucian brother, since his assistant Edward Kelley, who worked as an alchemist for the emperor Rudolf II in Prague, and for whom Carl Widemann had worked as secretary, devised a means of communicating with angels. The language was called Enochian. If this skill was unique to the fraternity, then Dee and Kelley must have been associated with it, was the supposition.

Since Widemann was almost certainly known to Eglin, this might explain

additionally why the first printing of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* was prefaced by a consideration of alchemical secrets based on John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* (1564). The *Monas* symbol devised by Dee was considered a form of "magic writing" (a *hiero*—or sacred—*glyph*), a precursor, it was hoped, of a future universal system of potent signs both spiritually powerful and pristinely mathematical: a revitalization of a presumed ancient union of science and religion, such as had been visible on Seth's pillars and in *frater C.R.*'s "compendium of the universe."

> These characters and letters, as God hath here and there incorporated them in the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, so hath he imprinted them in all beasts. So that like as the mathematician and astronomer can long before see and know the eclipses which are to come, so we may verily foreknow and foresee the darkness of obscurations of the Church, and how long they shall last. From the which characters or letters we have borrowed our magic writing, and have found out, and made, a new language for ourselves, in the which withal is expressed and declared the nature of all things. So that it is no wonder that we are not so eloquent in other languages, the which we know that they are altogether disagreeing to the language of our forefathers, Adam and Enoch, and were through the Babylonical confusion wholly hidden.
>
> But we must also let you understand that there are yet some Eagles' Feathers in our way, the which do hinder our purpose. Wherefore we do admonish everyone for to read diligently and continually the Holy Bible, for he that taketh all his pleasures therein, he shall know that he prepared for himself an excellent way to come to our Fraternity. For as this is the whole sum and content of our rule, that every letter or character which is in the world ought to be learned and regarded well; so those are like unto us, and are very near allied unto us, who do make the Holy Bible a rule of their life, and an aim and end of all their studies: yea to let it be a compendium and content of the whole world. And not only to have it continually in the mouth, but to know how to apply and direct the true understanding of it to all times and ages of the world. Also, it is not our custom to prostitute and make so common the Holy Scriptures; for there are innumerable expounders of the same; some alleging and wresting it to

serve for their opinion, some to scandal it, and most wickedly to liken it to a nose of wax, which alike should serve the divines, philosophers, physicians, and mathematicians, against all the which we do openly witness and acknowledge, that from the beginning of the world there hath not been given unto men a more worthy, a more excellent, and more admirable and wholesome Book than the Holy Bible. Blessed is he that hath the same, yet more blessed is he who reads it diligently, but most blessed of all is he that truly understandeth the same, for he is most like to God, and doth understand the same, for he is most like to God, and doth come most near to him.

"Eagles' Feathers" is a plain allusion to the highly significant passages of the second book of Esdras (also known in the period as 4 Ezra) that were taken as prophecy of a struggle between the Catholic Hapsburgs (whose heraldic animal was the eagle) and the evangelical forces of the Lion. For example:

> And I beheld, and lo, as it were a roaring lion chased out of the wood: and I saw that he sent out a man's voice unto the eagle, and said, Hear thou, I will talk with thee, and the Highest shall say to thee, Art thou it that remainest of the four beasts, whom I made to remain in my world, that the end of their times might come through them?
>
> And the fourth came [the "fourth monarchy" referred to in the *Fama* as having the fraternity's temporary allegiance], and overcame all the beasts that were past, and had power over the world with great fearfulness, and over the whole compass of the earth with much wicked oppression; and so long time he dwelt upon the earth with deceit. For the earth hast thou not judged with truth. For thou hast afflicted the meek, thou hast hurt the peaceable, thou hast loved liars, and destroyed the dwellings of them that brought forth fruit, and hast cast down the walls of such as did thee no harm.
>
> Therefore is thy wrongful dealing come up unto the Highest, and thy pride unto the Mighty.
>
> The Highest also hath looked upon the proud times, and behold, they are ended, and his abominations are fulfilled. And therefore appear no more, thou eagle, nor thy horrible wings, nor thy wicked feathers, nor thy

> malicious heads, nor thy hurtful claws, nor all thy vain body: That all the earth may be refreshed, and may return, being delivered from thy violence, and that she may hope for the judgement and mercy of him that made her. (2 Esd. 11:37–46)

Who can read these ancient words and not be struck by the power they must have had for those in fear for their faith in the sight of the powerful forces arrayed against them in the seventeenth century—forces that gave their eventual explosion in the Thirty Years' War (within five years of the publication of the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*) its apocalyptic character, a character twenty years later transferred to England and its civil war?

We may also note how the weight given to the Bible far exceeds that of the *Fama* with its Platonic optimism. Nevertheless, it will have been observed that while the Bible is a "compendium and quintessence of the whole world," its secrets are nonetheless undecipherable to the external, superficial, and materialist eye. The gift of divine intelligence is required to understand truly the inner dimension of the Word.

> But whatsoever hath been said in the *Fama* concerning the deceivers against the transmutation of metals, and the highest medicine in the world, the same is thus to be understood, that this so great gift of God we do in no manner set at naught, or despise it. But because she bringeth not with her always the knowledge of Nature, but this bringeth forth not only medicine, but also maketh manifest and open unto us innumerable secrets and wonders. Therefore it is requisite, that we be earnest to attain to the understanding and knowledge of philosophy. And moreover, excellent wits ought not to be drawn to the tincture of metals, before they be exercised well in the knowledge of Nature. He must needs be an insatiable creature, who is come so far, that neither poverty nor sickness can hurt him, yea, who is exalted above all other men, and hath rule over that, the which doth anguish, trouble and pain others, yet will give himself again to idle things, as to build houses, make wars, and use all manner of pride, because he hath of gold and silver infinite store.

When Rosicrucianism emerged in an organized form after the middle of the next century, alchemy was the predominant mode of Rosicrucian address and discourse. This is perhaps odd, since the original documents are plainly more interested in medicine and issues of learning and inner transformation. Nevertheless, the potential was there, as in the above passage. However, alchemy is not treated as one thing. There is the usual learned alchemists' condemnation of the "puffers," or those addicted to transmutation to gold alone, but there is also the understanding that when alchemical knowledge was sought as part of a wholesome quest into knowledge of nature (as with Paracelsus), and when the motives were to obtain principally the "golden medicine," that is, a universal healing agent, then alchemy was certainly something of serious interest to the fraternity.

This ambivalence proved a great tease for readers of the "manifestos." Just what kind of alchemy *was* Rosicrucian alchemy? They do not say, but it is certainly something linked to a high ethical attainment and not divorced from other inquiries into the natural order.

It would not be going beyond the text to suppose that Rosicrucian alchemy was linked to the knowledge of signs, the secret pinions of the universal order, and such seems to have led to the inclusion of a certain novel text with the first printing of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* in 1615, the *Consideratio brevis* (Brief consideration, of the more secret philosophy), attributed to one Philippo à Gabella. The *Consideratio brevis* may be considered an attempt to answer the question of what Rosicrucian alchemy might be. We shall examine it after the conclusion of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*.

> God is far otherwise pleased, for he exalteth the lowly, and pulleth down the proud with disdain; to those which are of few works, he sendeth his holy Angel to speak with them, but the unclean babblers he driveth in the wilderness and solitary places. The which is the right reward of the Romish seducers, who have vomited forth their blasphemies against Christ, and as yet do not abstain from their lies in this clear shining light. In Germany all their abominations and detestable tricks have been disclosed, that thereby he may fully fulfil the measure of sin, and draw near to the end of his punishment. Therefore one day it will come to pass, that the mouth of those vipers will be stopped and the triple crown will be

brought to nought, as thereof at our meeting shall more plain and at large be discoursed.

For conclusion of our Confession, we must earnestly admonish you, that you put away, if not all, yet the most books written by false Alchemists, who do think it but a jest, or a pastime, when they either misuse the Holy Trinity, when they do apply it to vain things, or deceive the people with most strange figures, and dark sentences and speeches, and cozen the simple of their money; as there are nowadays too many such books set forth, which the Enemy of man's welfare doth daily, and will to the end, mingle among the good seed, thereby to make the Truth more difficult to be believed, which in herself is simple, easy, and naked, but contrarily Falsehood is proud, haughty, and coloured with a kind of lustre of seeming godly and of humane wisdom. Ye that are wise eschew such books, and turn unto us, who seek not your moneys, but offer unto you most willingly our great treasures. We hunt not after your goods with invented lying tinctures, but desire to make you partakers of our goods. We speak unto you by parables, but would willingly bring you to the right, simple, easy and ingenuous exposition, understanding, declaration, and knowledge of all secrets. We desire not to be received by you, but invite you unto our more than kingly houses and palaces, and that verily not by our own proper motion, but (that you likewise may know it) as forced unto it, by the instigation of the Spirit of God, by his admonitions, and by the occasion of this present time.

The fraternity speaks in parables but makes no apology for it. The key here is to be found in the Gospel of Mark: "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand" (4:11–12a). This is the precise position of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* regarding secrets, illuminated further in the fourth chapter of Mark by the following: "For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad" (v. 22).

This poignant passage could be the text of which the *Confessio Fraternitatis* is the sermon. The Matthaean version of the saying (Matt.

10:26) appears on the title page of Raphael Eglin's *Epharmosis mundi* (The agreement of the world), published in Marburg in 1616 and dedicated to the landgrave Moritz. Eglin's work sets out to show a "divine physics," a harmony of mathematics and hieroglyphics.

The *Confessio Fraternitatis* continues its challenge to its time:

> What think you, loving people, and how seem you affected, seeing that you now understand and know, that we acknowledge ourselves truly and sincerely to profess Christ, condemn the Pope, addict ourselves to the true Philosophy, lead a Christian life, and daily call, entreat and invite many more unto our Fraternity, unto whom the same Light of God likewise appeareth? Consider you not at length how you might begin with us, not only by pondering the Gifts which are in you, and by experience which you have in the word of God, beside the careful consideration of the imperfection of all arts, and many other unfitting things, to seek for an amendment therein; to appease God, and to accommodate you for the time wherein you live. Certainly if you will perform the same, this profit will follow, that all those goods which Nature hath in all parts of the world wonderfully dispersed, shall at one time altogether be given unto you, and shall easily disburden you of all that which obscureth the understanding of man, and hindereth the working thereof, like unto the vain eccentrics and epicycles.
>
> But those pragmatic and busy-headed men, who either are blinded with the glittering of gold, or (to say more truly) who are now honest, but by thinking such great riches should never fail, might easily be corrupted, and brought to idleness, and to riotous proud living, those we desire that they would not trouble us with their idle and vain crying. But let them think, that although there be a medicine to be had which might fully cure all diseases, nevertheless those whom God hath destined to plaque with diseases, and to keep under the rod of correction, such shall never obtain any such medicine.
>
> Even in such manner, although we might enrich the whole world, and endue them with learning, and might release it from innumerable miseries, yet shall we never be manifested and made known unto any man without the especial pleasure of God; yea, it shall be so far from him

whosoever thinks to get the benefit and be partaker of our riches and knowledge, without and against the will of God, that he shall sooner lose his life in seeking and searching for us, than to find us, and attain to come to the wished happiness of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross.

JOHN DEE AND THE MORE SECRET PHILOSOPHY

The *Confession* of the brotherhood first appeared in print in a Latin version in March 1615, again printed by Wilhelm Wessell in Kassel. Research by Bruce T. Moran has shown that Raphael Eglin was instrumental in securing its publication.[1]

On the title page of the first edition, the *Confessione Fraternitatis* stands below another title: *Secretioris philosophiae, Consideratio brevis*—a brief consideration of the more secret philosophy by Philippo à Gabella. Moran has revealed to scholarship a letter to Moritz von Hessen wherein Eglin declares his intention to add a treatise to the *Confessio Fraternitatis* by one Philippo à Gabella. Moran is of the opinion that "Philippo à Gabella" was a pseudonym for Eglin himself, a view supported by the fact that the work was dedicated to the nobleman Bruno Carolus von Uffel, knight of the Order of Hass, a patron to Raphael Eglin and a frequent visitor to Kassel. This attribution is not certain, however.

That the first appearance in print of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* was made with a deep work by a name that sounds rather like "Cabala" has been used as ammunition for the view put forward by Frances Yates that John Dee's influence was central to the Rosicrucian enterprise. This is because the "Brief Consideration" takes as part of its subject matter John Dee's theorems concerning his hieroglyphic monad sign, suggesting that the symbol, joined to a star, was central to the R.C. fraternity's concern with a universal language of signs (this was certainly an interest of Eglin's).

SECRETIORIS
PHILOSOPHIÆ
Consideratio brevis
PHILIPPO à GABELLA
Philosophiæ St. conscripta,
CONFESSIONE
FRATERNITATIS R.C.
CASSELLIS
Excudebat Guilhelmus VVesselius III.
Princ. Typographus.
M. DC. XV.

The *Consideratio brevis* of the Secret Philosophy by "Philippo à Gabella" attached to the *Confessione Fraternitatis*. Kassel, Wilhelm Wessel, 1615. (Artwork courtesy of the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel.)

Yates expressed her view succinctly in *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age:*

> The German Rosicrucian manifestos reflect the philosophy of John Dee which he had spread abroad in the missionary venture of his second, or continental period [1580s]. One of the Rosicrucian manifestos contains a tract which is closely based on Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica.* Thus the Dee philosophy, which lies behind Spenser's poem [Edmund Spenser's poem *The Faerie Queen* has a character called "The Red Cross Knight"], which carried abroad by Dee would quite naturally translate Red Cross into Christian Rosenkreutz.[2]

This hypothesis has been rendered completely redundant by Carlos Gilly's and others' attention to the original German sources. The true story of Adam Haslmayr, for example, was completely unknown to Yates, even to the point where she suggested it might have been a merely symbolic inclusion to the *Fama*. Seldom has there been a case where British scholarship must have appeared so provincial to informed Continental eyes. Yates's hypotheses are, however, still in circulation, leading many readers down the garden path.

Nevertheless, we are left with the question of why a consideration of what

was at least in part a “secret philosophy” espoused by John Dee was seen to be so central to the “Confession” of the *fratres R.C.,* at least by Eglin. Frances Yates, after all, was not the first to tie Dee in to the Rosicrucian mythology. By the end of the century, for example, British antiquarian and Hermetic philosopher Elias Ashmole was familiar with a set of alchemical writings that falsely joined the name of Dee to the Rosicrucians, while a similar case of kinship grew out of the publication *Epistola Fratris Rogerii Baconis, de secretis operibus artis et naturae, et de nullitate magiae. Opera Ioh. Dee Londinensis e pluribus exemplaribus castigate olim, et ad sensum integrum restituta, nunc vero a quodam veritatis amatore, in gratiam verae scientae candidatorum foras emissa; cum notis quibusdam partim ipsus Johannis Dee, partim edentis* (A letter from Roger Bacon on the secret works of art and nature, and on the nothingness of magic. The works of John Dee, a Londoner once punished with many examples and restored to his proper reputation . . . ; Hamburg, Froben, 1618). This collection of extracts from the work of Dee and Roger Bacon was dedicated to “Clarissimis restitutionis universi Phosphoris, iluuminatis Roseae Crucis Fratribus unanimis. Mit Scholien des englischen Herausgebers P.S.” (The universal restitution of the dignity of the morning star, the harmonious and illuminated Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross . . .)

This tradition of a Dee-Bacon-Rosicrucian link would descend from the second decade of the seventeenth century as far as the literature of the California-based U.S. Rosicrucian organization AMORC, who, in their recruitment literature sent out in the 1970s, included Friar Roger Bacon as a member of the fraternity.

Part of the problem grew out of the circumstance that the two writings attributed to the Fraternity R.C. traveled abroad with an extensive, mixed company of camp-follower writings supporting them, opposing them, considering them, or simply using them to promote other ideas. The result was that the scenario presented to interested onlookers was that of dozens of Rosicrucians writing extraordinary, contradictory, or vain things, yet all apparently part of a single movement. This apparent movement was dubbed by Yates a movement of “Rosicrucian Enlightenment,” but she did not truly understand the elements of the movement in their own terms. Instead, she tried—rashly, as many scholars think—to attribute to that alleged movement

the dignity of being the protoscientific and proscientific flowering of Renaissance natural philosophy (or “Hermetic philosophy”) as envisioned by John Dee and other lights of the time, such as Giordano Bruno.

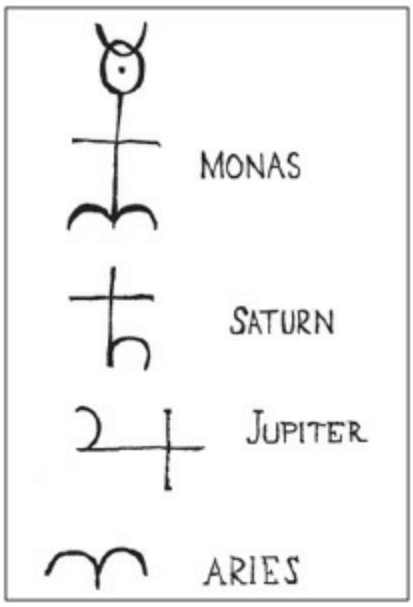
John Dee (1527–1609), portrait formerly in the possession of Elias Ashmole, now kept in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

On the other hand, to those who opposed the movement, the Rosicrucian looked entirely different. By the late 1650s, in England at any rate, the word “Rosicrucian” had become synonymous with “extremist nutcase,” while in places under Catholic administration the term had become synonymous with “heretic,” “rebel,” or “witch.” It may therefore seem vain to look at the Gabella material, since in one respect it represents just one of many responses to the original material. However, Gabella’s treatise is significant because it stands at the fount of a whole line of Rosicrucian tradition. Its content came to color what would later be accepted as Rosicrucian philosophy. It also has in its favor the distinction of having been added onto the authentic corpus at a very early date.

As to the question of who added the *Consideratio brevis*, we know that it was Eglin. Was he acting entirely alone? Carlos Gilly has suggested that it was Adam Haslmayr who influenced the inclusion of the Gabella material. This insight comes as a result of noting that on the first page of Haslmayr’s manuscripts *Philosophia sagax* (Sharp philosophy; 1613) and *Novum lumen physico-chemicum* (The new physico-chemical light; 1616), Haslmayr placed Dee’s *monas* topped by Paracelsus’s spiritual *astrum* (star).

It is possible that the star could, in this context, signify the nova of 1604. If the lower half of the *monas* is divided into the astrological symbols for Aries (part of the fiery trigon), Saturn, and Jupiter then the *monas* as a whole could

be taken as a prophetic sign joining the mercurial sun and moon to Saturn and Jupiter in great conjunction in the fiery trigon. The new star above would then be the new star that appeared above the great conjunction below in Sagittarius in 1604. It should be noted that the Gabella treatise refers to the *monas* throughout as the *stella hieroglyphica*, echoing Haslmayr's Paracelsian typology.



The *monas*, with its lower half divided into Saturn, Jupiter, and Aries.

Thus the inclusion of the Dee material would be justified because it brought together two ideas. First, the *monas* served to join the cosmic meaning of the events of 1604 to the theory of universal signs, where pure mathematics and alchemically potent hieroglyphs could be combined (an effectively "new" Rosicrucian science); and, second, the combination of new star with great conjunction set in motion an alchemically powerful projection to Earth that would result in the new age. This phenomenon would then constitute the deeper secret of both the *monas* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* referred to in Gabella's title. Usage of the *monas* could therefore constitute a kind of talisman, drawing forth the power of this great macrocosmic revolution.

Such an alchemically potent transformative power would be found within the dew (or *ros*) that was considered a microcosm of the star above. The dew had long been considered a kind of alchemical manna from heaven with

magical powers of fertility. Alchemists and wise women (“witches”) alike collected it. Dew was associated with God’s promises of inheritance and continuity.

The idea of star and earthly generation was linked on another level as well. Dee’s work, imitated by Gabella, speaks of the cross as being formed by precise vertical droplets generating a flux from which the four straight arms emerge (Theorem VII of Dee’s original work). These four lines represent the elements, as well as the point entering the second dimension (by being extended). The four lines also represent the Pythagorean *tetractys* (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10), or totality of arithmetical numbers in “squared” harmony (four numbers comprising all numbers in a “decade”). The four lines as a square also symbolize the act of creation, or foundation, and resolve to the primal unity: 1 + 0.

Dee had added his mathematical ideas to the optical theories of al-Kindi, which he discovered in the works of Roger Bacon concerning rays. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Haslmayr’s *Philosophia sagax* and “new physico-chemical light” proceed from the *stella hieroglyphica* to expound on the Great Work behind the formation of spiritual bread (*panum vitarum*) in the heavens. This spiritual bread is the “bread of life,” and thus the events of 1604 represent for our planet an alchemical eucharist, a new sacramental promise and epiphany of Christ, prophesied by him in the past and now available to the eyes that see, while yet active through the fiber and fluids of the world, whether seen or not. Thus the spiritual house of Christian Rosenkreuz was now truly alive in the world, dispensing the gold of the universal medicine.

While “Gabella” asserts in his treatise that the alchemical mercury is nothing more than water that is carried by the wind, nourished in the belly of the Earth, and raised by the sun as vapor, it might be seen that this alchemical virtue was particularly concentrated in the stellar concentration to be found in dew at astrologically propitious times. This dew would then become part of the universal medicine, whose value to health and life far exceeds mere mineral gold.

This combination of sign and salve, in Eglin’s mind, precisely specified the deeper value of the esoteric declarations of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*. If the Consideratio brevis is not Eglin’s work, then it certainly

reflects his historico-alchemical priorities. Whether these priorities reflected the thought of Haslmayr or whether he and Eglin had reached similar conclusions independently is unknown.

John Dee, *Monas hieroglyphica,* Antwerp, Gulielmus Sylvius, 1564. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

One thing is certain. Haslmayr's incandescent interest in the connections between the new star and John Dee's *monas* did not fizzle out when he was sent to the galleys. A year after he began his sentence, Haslmayr wrote a commentary on the subject in Sicily entitled *Monarchia stellae signata* (The monarchy of the stars signified). This work he accidentally dropped into the Bay of Genoa in 1613. Nevertheless, Eglin or "Gabella" did not need Haslmayr's illustration of the star above the *monas* to explore the connection. The colophon to *Monas hieroglyphica* in the original edition already contained an engraving of the hieroglyphic monad surmounted by a lady holding a star, surrounded by words that are reflected both on the frontispiece to the work and at the head of the *Consideratio brevis*. The words either side of the colophon are as follows: "*Supercaelestes roretis aquae; et terra fructum dabit suum*" (The supercelestial waters fall as dew; and the Earth will yield its fruit). The words at the head of the *Consideratio brevis* are: "May God give thee the dew of and the fatness of the earth" (Gen. 27:28).

This biblical reference is also found in Latin on the frontispiece to Dee's Monas hieroglyphica (1564). On the pillars above the quotation we see on the left the sun with the elemental word Ignis (Fire) above. On the right pillar we see the moon, above which is the elemental word Aer (Air). Both these bodies pour down dew into bowls beneath them.

The promise enacted in Gabella's reflection on the "more secret philosophy" was of a cosmic "Return to the One." Human beings would be enabled to reach the center of being, partake in the first golden moment of creation. Francesco Giorgi's De harmonia mundi (On the harmony of the world, 1525) was full of references to the principle of the One, called the monas, without whose essential reflection in the lower orders of created existence harmony within the disparate and contradictory elements of being would be impossible.

For the disorder in being of humans to be overcome by the really existent Harmony beyond them, access to the primal principle must be restored to them. The way to this prime principle had been celebrated by Pico della Mirandola in 1486, revealed in concept by Dee in 1564, and enacted in fact by the stellar phenomena of Serpentarius and Cygnus in 1604. This was the fundamental "secret" of the Fraternity R.C.

Through understanding this idea, we can get to the heart of Eglin's interest in the Rosicrucian writings. Eglin discerned in the Fama a profound reverence for ancient wisdom. Within this wisdom, illuminated by the indices found in the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, was held the seed of a new political order, a golden age to bring Europe to its purest, reformed state, symbolized by the power of the lion's roar upon the many-headed eagle. The world would see the by-products—political changes, new discoveries, a new spirit of brotherhood, and so on—but very few, indeed, only those called to silent witness of the Great Miracle, would see or be called to participate in the Great Work itself, accomplished in the alchemy of the heavens. As such a witness, Eglin dared to call himself "the least of the brothers R.C."

While it may be argued that Eglin brought to the fore a theme that would eventually in some quarters surmount all others, namely alchemy, it should be recognized that the Gabella interpretation of alchemy was entirely in conformity with the *Confessio Fraternitatis'*s particular emphasis on the golden medicine, that is, alchemy's role in the health, rather than wealth, of

humankind:

> I acknowledge the spagyric art as representing the most skilful and sophisticated of all the arts, through which I am able to give you my opinion on these matters. For, as if by divine ordinance, it teaches us how to distinguish the pure from the impure, just as logic distinguishes truth from falsehood; it teaches us when to separate substances and when to bring them together; it teaches us the method most favourable to Nature, for it distinguishes between the clear and the confused, the subtle and the gross, the light and the heavy, fire and air, air and water, water and earth. In such a way as this did the Creator Himself show us everything in the First Creation. We are his imitators, and although we do not try to duplicate his work throughout the entire universe, yet we do attempt it in this small and confined world of ours. It is certain that since each of these considerations concerns the Universal Medicine, each one is also concerned with a method of enquiry. Therefore I affirm that the Universal Medicine for bodies is the philosophic gold, after it has been separated and drawn to the highest state of perfection. Our common gold has absolutely nothing in common with the philosophic gold we use to begin our task. In that respect common gold is dead and clearly useless. For just as a chicken is not born from a cooked egg, the Universal Medicine will not come from cast gold.
>
> Careful consideration must be given to what must be done, for we must not pervert nature but imitate it accurately to the best of our abilities. All the wise men agree that there is only this one substance, the One Medicine (speaking hieroglyphically), to which nothing is added and only the superfluous is removed (and even this process is achieved naturally). It is therefore a most difficult task to locate this medicine amongst the multitude of substances, although it would certainly be ignorant folly to look for it in an unnatural substance. The search is therefore rightly directed towards the sources of the metals and minerals. The philosophers set two of these above all the rest, that is, the sources of mercury and of sulphur. But just as they do not mean common gold, neither do they mean common sulphur or common mercury. The philosophers' gold is living, subtle and spiritual. Common gold is dense, hard and unchanging. The

philosophers' mercury is the prime material of all things: without it the M cannot exist. But in fact liquid mercury, or quicksilver, is an impure metal which comes from its own special seed. The philosophers' sulphur is pure, permanent, white or red and flammable. Common sulphur, however, is combustible and impermanent. Hence it is easy to understand the difference between the philosophers' gold and that of those who are mistaken; between the philosophers' sulphur and that of the foolish; between the philosophers' mercury and that of the ignorant. The difference between heaven and earth is as great as the difference between the truly wise and the sophist.

The philosophers' gold is gold that has not yet solidified or hardened naturally, for if it were to do so then our man-made fire would have no effect on it, and the craftsman would be frustrated by his own skill. It is removed from the prime source of all the metals by pruning and separation through spring water, and in a natural way. For just as the Microcosm was first created out of the Macrocosm without a soul, which was later breathed into it by divine power, in a similar way does our man [mercury] appear. Later, he too receives a soul which is brought forth and kindled by the continuously regulated movement of the fire beneath. When our Mercury is joined with either magnesia or lunaria it is more correctly known as "aqua sicca" [dry water]. This does not wet the hands and when placed near a fire it flees like a runaway slave. It is also known as Proteus, since it transforms itself into various, distinct forms and is itself transformed by this process. At times it appears in the form of dew, at times like heavenly rain, sometimes even like snow, hail, hoar frost or a cloud, as if it were dressed in a cloak. This transformation can be seen everywhere: however it comes about, whether in metals, animals or vegetable matter, it is essential for the appearance of the mercury so that the work can be brought to a conclusion.

The mercury of Hermes and of all the Philosophers is water, the water that falls from the sky as rain and which the Sun, as its father, extracts from the earth each day in a very fine vapour and takes up into that part of the sky where the downpour is formed. Here it is condensed into rainwater by the innate natural force of the Moon, its mother, using that same power with which she controls affairs below. Thus it condenses into

rainwater, thickens and falls in drops by its own weight. It is moved around willy-nilly by the air or the wind (which is, after all, nothing more than the movement of the air) until it lands upon the centre point, that is, the earth, its nursemaid, who must then carry it in her lap. Perhaps this seems like a Gordian knot, yet one even tighter than Alexander's, which can only be cut by the sword of reason.

As I have often told my sons of knowledge and wisdom, the Philosophers' sulphur is first formed when the water has returned to the earth. At times it floats on the top of the water and is multicoloured, like the earth covered in foliage, or like some kind of thick broth. All these different hues derive from the greenness of the vitriol. But experience has confirmed that all water which is without spirit may be hardened by heat, and that which has spirit may be hardened by cold. He who understands how water can be hardened by heat and how the spirit can be joined with it, will certainly discover something a thousand times more precious than gold, more precious than anything. Therefore the alchemist should separate the spirit from the water and allow it to decay until it resembles a seed. After the waste has been discarded he should reintroduce the spirit into the water from above, and effect a conjunction between these two. It is this conjunction or arrangement that will produce an offspring utterly different from its parents.[3]

In the view of Carlos Gilly, whoever wrote the "brief consideration" was an "exceptional adept" in alchemy, an "oustanding spagyrist" (maker of alchemical medicine), who not only understood the obscure theorems of John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* but also knew how to combine them with the teachings on "vitriol" attributed to Basil Valentine.[4] However, Gilly reckons that Dee's work was, in the process, suppressed by assimilation in a new sign that reduced the whole alchemical process to a single formula. This formula is still found today in French Masonic workings in the "chamber of reflection" familiar to initiates of the first degree: *Visitetis interiora terrae, rectificando, invenietis occultum lapidem*, *veram medicinam* (Visit the innermost earth, to be restored, you may find the hidden stone, the true healing), where the first letters of the injunction spell out the word *vitriol*, whose sign is the hieroglyphic star, or *stella signata*.

Gilly takes it that since Haslmayr also radically reconstituted the symbol originated by Dee, Frances Yates's elevation of "her countryman" Dee to determinative status in the Rosicrucian story was unjustified, if not "eccentric." Dee was, according to Gilly, one of many other "provisioners of an alchemical and Hermetic tradition from which the alchemists and theosophists of the seventeenth century made rich usage."[5] One wonders what "Philippo à Gabella" himself would have thought about this demotion of the good Dr. Dee and his more secret philosophy from the hierarchy of Rosicrucian progenitors.

Gilly has not taken into account the fact that Dee was in his lifetime, and even more so after his death in 1608, widely denounced as a wizard, a "conjuror" (of spirits), a dark and dangerous magician who had concourse with demons and whose assistant, Sir Edward Kelley, was a necromantic criminal. After his death, Dee's reputation belonged, as it were, to his enemies. Rose Cross sympathizer Elias Ashmole attempted an only partially successful rehabilitation between 1650 and 1692.

Dee's was not the kind of name one would go bandying about in 1615 when trying to launch a new, holy, and unimpeachably respectable movement. To state "We believe this because John Dee taught it" would have invited derision and, possibly, criminal and religious investigation. Indeed, during the Rosicrucian scare in Paris in 1623, the name and reputation of John Dee were so much at the center of the calumnies hurled against the fraternity that Gabriel Naudé felt constrained to write a work in defense of *Great Men Suspected of Magic* (Paris, 1625) in which Dee was defended as "a learned philosopher and mathematician," rather than a "conjuror."

Indeed, in this regard, it may well be significant that the "brief consideration" into the more secret philosophy might already have been deemed to have gone too far, having perhaps revealed too much of the depth of the well from which the "least of the brothers R.C." was drawing alchemical sustenance. The next Kassel edition of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* (also printed by Wessell in 1615) excluded the work of Philippo à Gabella completely. Gabella, thereafter, disappeared.

The new edition contained the *Fama* (without the Haslmayr response or the Boccalini satire) and a German translation of the *Confessio Fraternitatis* attributed to one "philomagus." Speculation on the identity of the magus that

“philomagus” loved is useless, as is, probably, speculation on the identity of philomagus himself. Pseudonymity will become a continual trait of the Rosicrucian responses, whether from self-conscious piety, fear, or affectation and imitation we may never know.

Gilly nonetheless has suggested that while “philomagus” might plausibly be anyone, he might also be Jacob Müller, a friend of Benedictus Figulus and a professor of mathematics at Giessen who, at the trial of Heinrich Nollius, made in his confession the revelation that he had taken a copy of the *Fama* to the printers at Kassel.

It is probably symptomatic of the way the Rosicrucian furor developed that Gabella’s interesting treatise was quickly silenced, so I should like to give the last word of this chapter to the author of the brief consideration of the more secret philosophy, because in that work he says something very important—and unusual for its time—on the nature of scientific “truth”:

> Wisdom always increases in the presence of men.
>
> So you must be taught, says Seneca, as long as you remain ignorant (perhaps throughout our whole lives), if we are to believe in this saying. It is true that all things increase through time and that in this way the arts have developed to such an extent that the practitioners of our day far exceed their predecessors. So it is that your own skill in the study of philosophy has itself grown: if we compare the older students of the true and more secret wisdom with you, we find that they appear quite worthless. If Hermes, the father of philosophy, were to be brought back to life today, there is no doubt that he would be laughed at by the alchemists, just as the sculptors say that if Daedalus was living today and was to make such things as those which made him famous, he too would appear ridiculous. Indeed, the wise men of today far excel their predecessors in increasing the number of syllogisms for our ultimate benefit. Every skill increases: if the well is drawn off it fills up all the better. But once you have arrived at a right decision you must continue along that path, otherwise you will be led astray from the truth before you have even started out on your way. Pile up that which is rare and in short supply in the open air and, after it has been completely soaked by the water, the rotting damp and its location make it waste away.[6]

NINE

ROSYMANIA I

The Furor and Its Aftermath

If the poor human race
Were not so arrogant
It would have been given much good
From my mother's heritage,
But because the human race will not take heed
It lies in such straits
And must be held in prison.
And yet my dearest mother
Will not regard their mischief,
She leaves her lovely gifts
That many a man might come to the light,
Though this may chance but seldom
That they be better prized
Nor reckoned as mere fable.

Therefore in honour of the feast
Which we shall hold today,
That her grace may be multiplied
A good work will she do:
The rope will now be lowered
Whoever may hang on to It

He shall be freed.

J. V. ANDREAE, *THE CHEMICAL WEDDING OF CHRISTIAN ROSENKREUZ*

The R.C. fraternity was either nothing but a lie or it was a lie that had mysteriously touched on a profound truth. Is there an invisible fraternity that has the divine care of humankind as its priority, gifted with what to normal folk appear to be supernatural gifts? The story of Rosicrucianism proves that many people, often of the highest intelligence and abilities, either have believed such to be the case or have at least been deeply attracted to such an idea. The possibility that one day one might be admitted to the company of the secret makers or guides of planetary destiny is profoundly moving to a certain kind of mind. How may we characterize this kind of mind?

Dissatisfied by what the world ordinarily offers, this kind of mind sees human life as the visible and outward sign of an inward conflict or dynamic play of invisible forces. Thus, the proper business of spiritual genius lies not in following the vain and contradictory struggles of the superficial world, but in becoming one who stands apart, and who only in extreme circumstances (when fundamental harmonic relations are severely in danger of catastrophe) will be willing to pull or release subtle levers of change. Such a person at his or her highest level joins, by dint of consciousness achieved and maintained, the hidden masters of transformation, the unknown sovereigns of change, true guardians of spiritual evolution.

Such a mind finds itself in immediate sympathy with the underlying principles of the first Rosicrucian writings, whether the content of the writings are taken literally or not. That is to say, the declarations of the invisible fraternity constitute a form of effective and affective magical writing.

One of the fascinating things about the R.C. furor was the way the debate —while often “mad,” immoderate, extreme, bigoted, opportunistic, magical, or fanatical—nevertheless rose above the ordinary political, social, and religious concerns of the day. People got high on the idea of it all.

The House of the Holy Spirit, from *Speculum sophicum rhodostauroticum*, Theophilus Schweighart [Daniel Mögling], 1618. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Another interesting thing (to be explored in the next chapter) is why its creator—or, if you prefer, scribe—reacted so strongly against the excitement generated by his creation. Then again, the Beatles soon tired of Beatlemania. John Lennon in particular, the "Andreae," if I may say, of that particular movement, would rather have smashed the idol than have it worshipped. Such extravagant choices will mean little until the reader becomes better acquainted with the lineaments of the furor that began in 1614 and that emitted sparks in the darkening skies for the next twenty years or so, a furor that was both to engage (and to disappoint) many of the best minds of northern Europe.

And that still does.

JULIUS SPERBER AND AEGIDIUS GUTMANN

Julius Sperber was court doctor to Augustus von Anhalt's brother Ludwig at

Köthen in Saxen-Anhalt. In his *Wunderbuch*, Sperber declared that after having had a dream that echoed with the prophet Isaiah's experience of being chosen to see what others could not, Sperber became convinced that a new, golden age was approaching. All the signs were there, and events seemed to be falling into place. He, Julius Sperber, had been set apart to witness the change. Then he heard the declarations of the Fraternity R.C.

In 1615, Sperber published his *Echo der von Gott hocherleucheten Fraternitet* (Echo of the God-illuminated fraternity; Danzig, 1615). In this colorful treatise, Sperber felt it incumbent on him to announce to the world that the wisdom discovered by *frater C.R.* was nothing less than the antediluvian wisdom recalled by Adam from paradise and handed on through his son Seth to the patriarchs, thence to the Chaldeans, the Persian sage Zoroaster (Zarathustra), and the Egyptians, while being preserved in the Hebrew Kabbalah. According to Sperber, while a new dispensation was inaugurated for all by Jesus Christ, who showed the way to eternal bliss, a nonetheless secret wisdom was reserved for the few able to take the path of divine knowledge. This wisdom became lost in heathen lands until a tiny handful of enlightened Christians rediscovered it. Sperber names the following as treasurers of this wisdom: Johannes Reuchlin, Marsiglio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, and one Aegidius Gutmann.

This itinerary of descent of the holy *gnosis* was to become a staple element of the Rosicrucian "transmission theory" from Sperber's time to ours, constituting what I shall call the classic Gnostic pedigree. It is perfectly obvious that had it been Sperber's times that witnessed the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Christian Gnostic Library, then Sperber would have included that as well. As it was, Sperber had the astonishing manifestation of the brothers R.C. to stimulate further his task of awakening the potential adept to gnostic wisdom.

Sperber's references to Reuchlin, Pico, Ficino, and Agrippa show that he had perfectly grasped the significance of the arrival of the *Corpus Hermeticum* to Florence in 1460, as well as the importance of the Christian Cabala that soon accompanied that distinct Renaissance movement. By making the link, Sperber, at the very dawn of the Rosicrucian movement, fixed it historically as a development in a pan-historical secrettransmission

narrative, making the invisible brethren inheritors, transmitters, and contributors to an alternative religious tradition that providence had maintained in existence since the beginning of human experience and that would be established and glorified in the new age.

As a man who saw himself as in the know, Sperber had no hesitation in claiming that he had seen Rosicrucian material long before the publication of the *Fama*, at the end of the previous century. This reveals his outlook, that he was himself a part agent of the great change coming. If he was himself privy to the true line of gnostic descent, then he was also himself in association, at least, with the *fratres R.C.* In Sperber's mind, the Rose Cross material conformed to his already established way of seeing things. That is to say, the *fratres R.C.* confirmed his vision of the future. Thus, Sperber would state in his *Echo* that his preface to Aegidius Gutmann's 1,100-page cabalistic commentary on Genesis 1–24, *Offenbarung göttliche Majistät* ([The revelation of the divine Majesty], eventually published in Hanau by Johann Wolff in 1619) had been written by him in 1597, before the Rosicrucian excitement.

In the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, there is a manuscript by Sperber with a date of April 9, 1597, that deals with three apocalyptic ages, of nature, grace, and glory: *Von Dreyerlei Seculis sampt Göttliche Prophecey und Weiss sagung von der zunamenden Güldene das ist dritten und Letzten Zeit* (Of the Three-fold Age together with Divine Prophecy and Foretelling of the increasing Golden, that is to say, Third and Last Time). This work also promotes the idea of a new age, backed up by Paracelsian medicine and holy magic.

Two years earlier, a table of contents of Aegidius Gutmann's massive work (conforming to the "enlightened" interpretation of scripture advocated in the *Confessio Fraternitatis*) had been offered to the emperor Rudolf II in Prague (now in the Codices Vossiani Chymici, Leiden), while subsections from Gutmann's "Revelation" also appear in a list of Carl Widemann's extensive collection of manuscripts, a list that reveals Gutmann's real name, Eucharius Guetterman. One has the feeling that Sperber must have thought, to himself at least, that the producers of the Rosicrucian manifestos should have consulted him first!

On this evidence, Susanna Åkerman's suggestion that one might speak of

“something like a proto-Rosicrucian fellowship in the summer of 1597”[1] makes little sense. On those terms, Sperber’s “transmission family” from Adam to the Florentine and German Hermeticists might also be described as “proto-Rosicrucians”! Labels are libels.

PHILIP ZIEGLER, KING OF THE ROSICRUCIANS

In 1652, a correspondent of John Dee supporter Elias Ashmole (1617–1692) informed the English Hermeticist that John Dee was “acknowledged for one of ye Brotherhood of ye R.CR by one of that Fraternity, who calleth himself Philip Zieglerus.”[2]

It is interesting that Philip Ziegler, who also promoted himself as “King of the Rosicrucians,” was, unlike the Kassel pro-Rosicrucians, not shy about promoting Dee as one of the brotherhood. Ziegler was a revolutionary enthusiast for whom the message of the Rosicrucian manifestos was fundamentally a message of political, social, and religious revolution. Ziegler was, one might say, rather outspoken.

The golden age would not come by itself. Conspiracy against the prevailing social order would be necessary to quicken the cause. Susanna Åkerman puts the matter more delicately when she writes of how “the Rosicrucian literary ‘code’” could equally well disrupt authority and “liberate alternative voices speaking against the original horizon of expectation formulated by élite writers such as Maier.”[3]

I wonder whether Ziegler ever thought of himself as a liberated alternative voice. His was certainly not a voice that either the polite world of today’s Rosicrucians or the spiritual pietists of yesteryear would wish to be associated with.

It would be interesting to know for certain if it was the example of exiled preacher Philip Ziegler that turned Moritz von Hessen against students Homagius and Zimmerman when he approved of their trial and imprisonment at Marburg in 1619 for being Rosicrucians. Did this trial in Hesse-Kassel establish a trend, or did it reflect a gathering mood of opposition to Rosicrucians viewed as a subversive sect?

As we shall see, some rulers of Continental states in the next century would condescend to show indulgence toward Rosicrucian and Freemasonic groups (in the cause of “enlightenment” or curiosity), even where there was orthodox religious opposition to their existence. However, the moment the whiff of actual or imagined political action might emerge, and regardless of the personal interests or sympathies of the sovereign, repression was almost always swift to follow.

Labels are libels.

The case of Ziegler, then, establishes early on another persistent feature of the Rosicrucian story and its mythic dimension: Rosicrucians as covert plotters against the status quo. Ziegler’s activities, however, were no myth.

In 1646, an Amsterdam-based pro-Rosicrucian and mystical follower of Jacob Böhme, Abraham von Franckenberg, would join the name of Ziegler to a list of cabalist sages that already included Joachim di Fiore, Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin, Agrippa, Francesco Giorgi, Giordano Bruno, Johannes Bureus, and Julius Sperber. The list appeared in a new edition of Guillaume Postel’s 1553 work, *Absconditorum a constitutione mundi clavis* (The key for those who have abandoned the laws of the world; Amsterdam, 1646), which dealt with the mystical theme of the seven ages, by now familiar to readers. Von Franckenberg presented the book to the court of Wladislaus IV of Poland—something that would never have happened to Philip Ziegler himself.

ANTINARNOLDUS ET ANTINAGELIUS
Das ist
Gründlicher
Beweiß / das weder die
Zehen Grunde M. PHILIPPI ARNOLDI
(Bäbstischer Phantesey nach) Erzvriesters zu Tilsit in
Preussen / das Tertium seculum Spiritus Sancti, die Dritte
M. PAULI NAGELII Lipsensis Mathematici &c.
Für nachrichtung vnd Trost der gantzen werthen
Von
PHILIPPO ZIEGLERO E. C. Von Würtzburg / dieses
Gedruckt im Jahr / Anno 1622. 16. May.

Philip Ziegler (“King of the Rosicrucians”), *Antiarnoldus et Antinagelius: Das ist gründlicher Beweiss*, (Anti-Arnold and Anti-Nagel: That’s profound proof; May 16, 1622); a polemic against the works of Philip Arnold and astro-calendar maker Paul Nagel.

Ziegler was certainly a globetrotter of the subversive, zealous kind, in which category Andreae doubtless included Benedictus Figulus, so it should come as no surprise that Figulus met up with Ziegler in the winter of 1617, shortly after the former’s release from prison and not long after Ziegler’s own exile from Strasbourg, whence he had been ejected for declaring himself König (king) of the Rosy Cross.

Ziegler had already exhausted the tolerance of persons in Basel, Worms, and Speier and would go on to test the ice in Frankfurt (1620), Nuremberg, Holstein, Denmark, Sweden, Bern, France, and Prague. Åkerman has speculated that it might even have been Ziegler who set off the 1623 Rosicrucian scare in Paris. That would give him a lot to answer for. According to one source, four of the infernal, invisible brethren who had “terrorized” Paris left the French capital to upset Sweden.[4]

According to Åkerman, Ziegler claimed to have paid Sweden a call sometime between 1619 and 1622. If so, Ziegler would have been in that country when Hans Bramer, a trader, and Johan Bannier, a tailor from Pomerania, were arrested in that country for Rosicrucian beliefs in the summer of 1622.

This was the period when orthodox religious authorities were on the lookout for “Weigelian” heretics (after mystic Valentin Weigel, 1533–1588), whose central belief in the “inner Christ” allied to the microcosmic theory was seen as a threat to the doctrines of Catholic and Catholicderived confessions. Religious or mystical Paracelsians were generally attacked as Weigelians so as not to confuse the issue with the status of Paracelsus in the field of medicine. The label “Weigelian” also served as a cover for persecuting Rosicrucians.

Thus, in 1620, the trial in Tübingen of bookseller Eberhard Wild for trading in condemned Weigelian and Schwenckfeldian books also implicated Johann Valentin Andreae, since Wild had edited one of Andreae’s devotional works, and Andreae was himself suspected of unspecified but unproven subversiveness.

In Sweden in 1622, Bannier and Bremer, being German, endured the additional suspicion that they might be spies. Bannier, author of a tract that glorified Johann Arndt as an Elias-like prophet, was so filled with spiritual enthusiasm that he presented himself to Queen Kristina of Holstein. Bannier told her that his flesh was now without sin since he was truly reborn and anointed from above. His old Adam had died within him, and Christ now reigned as unchallenged sovereign of his inner life. God was very soon to take over direct spiritual governance of the world.

This was not a message calculated to endear Bannier to a protector of the Lutheran Church. The queen felt intimidated and passed the prophet on to a learned adviser, who in turn passed Bannier on to the lord high chancellor. But Axel Oxenstierna had been forewarned by Nicolas Granius of the University of Helmstedt about the new Rosicrucian menace. He now understood that its prophecies were based on dreams, ecstasies, and *enthusiasm*.

Bannier, exiled to Denmark, soon left for Lübeck, home of Joachim Morsius, but, detected there as a fanatic, was exiled once more. No authority wanted Rosicrucians; they were too hot to handle and needed cooling off.

What Ziegler may have gotten up to in Sweden is unknown. He was in Holland in 1624, stirring things up in Groningen and in Amsterdam while the Thirty Years’ War raged in Germany. In 1626, Ziegler approached the new king Charles Stuart’s court in London with a plan to reduce the Spanish king

to his knees, ditto the pope, and—for a topping—convert the Turks and the Jews to Christianity. These are all themes truly twisted from the bark of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*, but strangely lacking in sap.

The British court was having none of it. Ziegler's papers were seized. They revealed a remarkable plan whose title announced a total reformation of the world without the least trace of irony. Working for the "higher cause" and thinking in terms of fulfilling a Joachimite visionary scheme, 300,000 European aristocrats were to be killed, while the lesser clergy were to rise against all ecclesiastical authority.

Perhaps this was only a discussion paper. Anyhow, according to this somewhat ambitious scheme, the blue (or red) touch-paper would be ignited at a conference of Rosicrucians to take place at Constance. Constance, in Swabia, south of Strasbourg, and not far from Figulus's home in Freiburg, was chosen because it was there that the first hero of the Reformation, John Hus, was condemned to the flames by order of an ecclesiastical council in 1417. Ziegler's plan represented no threat to law and order—and certainly not the Protestant powers—as such; it simply called for the extremely violent demise of Catholic power in Europe.

This was not something that, in principle, was opposed by many in England, caught up as they were in anti-Spanish enthusiasms of their own, so Ziegler was permitted to go on his way. (Susanna Åkerman thinks it likely that Ziegler had a supporter in King Charles's sister Elizabeth, wife of Frederick of the Palatinate, deposed king of Bohemia, whose leonine cause had died at the Battle of the White Mountain in Prague in 1620.)

Ziegler's legacy remained, however. When in 1659 Meric Casaubon published a one-sided and politically edited version of the "spiritual diaries" of Dr. John Dee (thus destroying what was left of the old man's reputation), Casaubon was able to build a case that the last forty years had been assailed by "Anabaptists" and "Enthusiasts"; Dee's prophecies and spiritual activities derived, according to Casaubon, from the same subversive source. The *bêtes noires* of the Anabaptist and the Enthusiast would very soon fuse together in the word "Rosicrucian" to mean socially subversive, radical, spiritually impious, politically experimental, utopian threats to the "true" harmony of life. Casaubon himself called the guilty teachers of the menace Illuminati, thereby establishing a dangerous fiction that would, a century and a half later,

become a subversive reality.

After the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, satirist Samuel Butler was able to add mortar to Casaubon's bricks with his works *Hudibras* and *Characters*, point a finger directly at the decade-long rule of Oliver Cromwell (with and without parliament), and shout, for all to hear: "Rosicrucian!" It was, apparently, thanks to the Rosicrucians that everything had gone crazy. After 1660, no one with a reputation and livelihood to lose would come out and openly declare Rosicrucian sympathies. The vat had turned sour. It would be like a politician today saying to his potential electorate, "Man, I have always been and always will be . . . a *hippie*!"

However, since the cause of the fraternity had always been intended to be something held with the utmost discretion, the constraint imposed by the public or "pop" image of Rosicrucianism might even have served as a relief to secretive magi, who liked to keep their spiritual secrets to themselves and their closest friends.

It may be supposed that after Ziegler's run-in with British security services, he may have toned down his activities and expectations. Perhaps he became more pious, inward, and thoughtful, as has happened to many a crazed spiritual radical chastened by experience and somewhat depleted in the kind of enthusiasm that levitates the brain and unbinds the cords of inhibition. How else could we explain the deeply mystical Abraham von Franckenberg's including Ziegler in a list of cabalist sages of gnostic hue twenty years later? Ziegler must have cooled down considerably; perhaps he came to his senses.

COUNT MICHAEL MAIER

In 1617, Lucas Jennis of Frankfurt published Michael Maier's slim volume, *Silentium post clamores* (Silence after the noise). For reasons of his own, this most learned doctor took it upon himself to explain to all who wished to know why it was that after all the many dozens of pamphlets written addressing the *fratres R.C.*, nobody appeared to have received a reply. This curious phenomenon must have been a widespread and pressing concern. If Maier knew the answer, he would have a market for his book.

Maier appears to have been using the Rosicrucian affair as a means of

advancing his own works and highly elaborate, alchemical point of view. He never claimed to be of the fraternity, but he did claim to know what kind of outfit it really was.

Because several of his works are addressed to Rosicrucian issues, he has traditionally been taken as, if not an actual brother, then certainly someone very close to the fraternity. This is a misapprehension.

In his book *Symbola aureae menseae duodecim nationum* (Symbols of the golden table of twelve nations; Frankfurt, Lucas Jennis, 1617), Maier admits that when he first heard about the Rosicrucians in England, he did not take them seriously. He saw value in them only after attending the Frankfurt Book Fair of 1616. Presumably, he had an opportunity at that occasion to see just how much public interest had been aroused by the Rosicrucians. The book fair was stuffed with fresh Rosicrucian revelations. Maier saw the benefits of linking that interest to his own work. Like many another Rosicrucian apologist, he tried to use the furor to steer people toward his own work. Maier, however, it must be said, accomplished this task with considerable style.

TRES SCHOLA, TRES COESAR TITVLOS DE
DIT; HAEC MIHI RESTANT,
POSSE BENE IN CHRISTO VIVERE, POSSE MORI.
MICHAEL MAIERVS COMES IMPERIALIS CON
SISTORII etc. PHILOSOPH. ET MEDICINARVM
DOCTOR. P. C. C. NOBIL. EXEMPTVS FOR. OLIM
MEDICVS CAES. etc.

Portrait of Count Michael Maier, *Silentium post clamores;* Frankfurt, Lucas Jennis, 1617. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

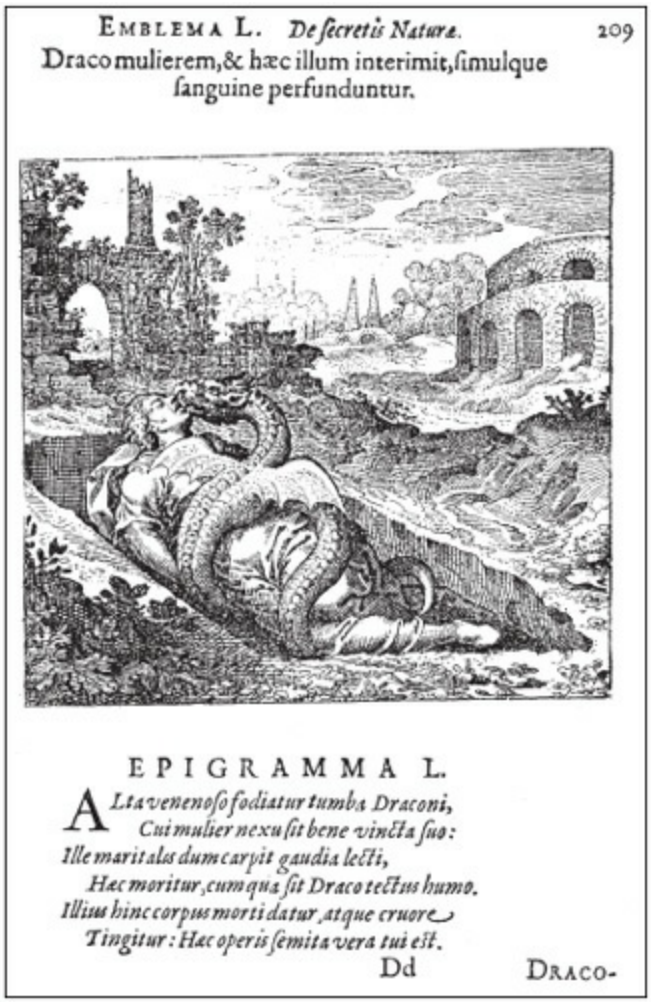
So effective was his effort, in fact, that since that time, historians and followers of Rosicrucianism have found it impossible to separate Maier from

the essence of the Rosicrucian movement. This is hardly surprising. In Paris in 1623, anti-Rosicrucian Jesuit François Garasse described Maier as the fraternity's secretary. The word originally meant one privy to his employer's secrets, and Maier certainly wrote as if this was the case. Frances Yates, in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, even called Maier "the deepest of the Rosicrucians." Maier was deeply read in classical mythology, philosophy, and in alchemy, but he was not a Rosicrucian in any meaningful sense.

Reading back from his subsequent interest in the movement, historians have loaded Maier's visit to England in 1612 with Rosicrucian consequence. Thus, it is widely held that he met Dr. Robert Fludd, England's first-known Rosicrucian apologist. While they were both doctors, there is no evidence whatsoever of the men's meeting, or of Maier giving Fludd a copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis* and thus launching a British Rosicrucian movement. Fludd, too, as we shall see, fell under the spell of launching his own point of view in a ship carrying the jolly Rose and Cross pinned to its mast. Naturally, subsequent searchers for the fraternity joined Maier and Fludd in deep spiritual fraternity. The Rosicrucian movement had become a bandwagon; writers drinking from the same trough seldom desire each other's company.

There is no doubt that Maier's books are special and in some respects technically innovative works of German late-Renaissance thinking and book production, but it is arguable that they bring nothing more to Rosicrucian development than decorative color (due largely to the amazing and highly stimulating illustrations to his works by Theodore de Bry) and the great weight of Maier's extensive learning, which included the magical use of music.

For example, where the subject of Maier's work is alchemy, it is alchemy (and especially its value to medicine) that is being described, not Rosicrucian alchemy. Maier adored symbolism. He could see as well as anyone that the *fratres R.C.* had symbolic power, and he used it. *Silentium post clamores* shows this very well. If you really wished to know why the fraternity appeared to have shut up shop after the first two announcements, do not expect a convincing answer from Michael Maier.


EMBLEMA L. *De secretis Naturæ.* 209

Draco mulierem,& hæc illum interimit,simulque sanguine perfunduntur.

EPIGRAMMA L.

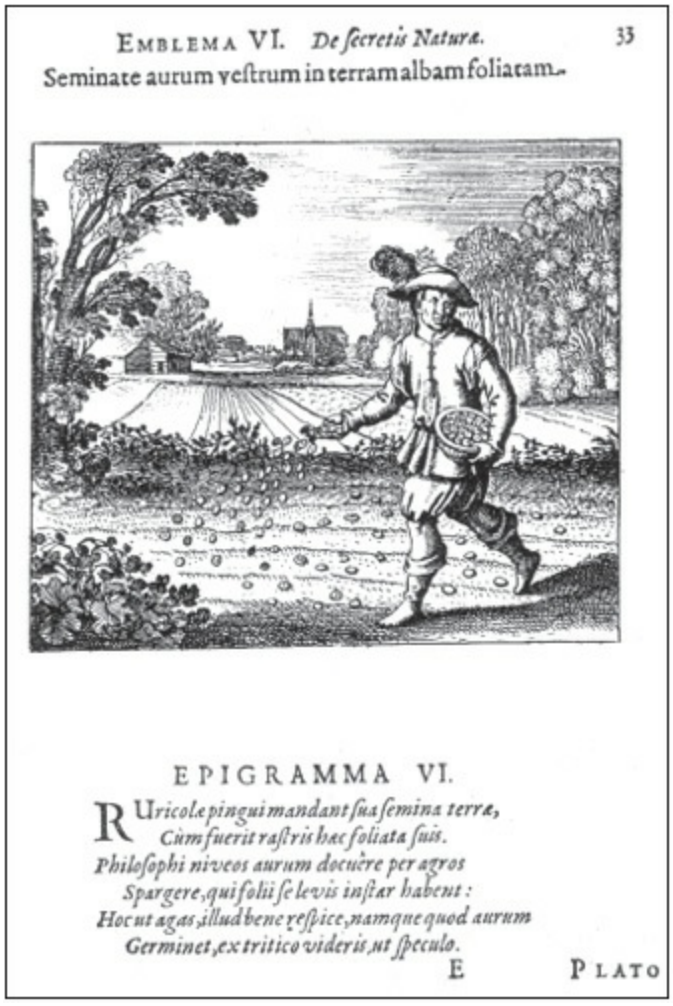
Alta venenoso fodiatur tumba Draconi,
Cui mulier nexu sit bene vincta suo:
Ille maritalis dum carpit gaudia lecti,
Hæc moritur, cum qua sit Draco tectus humo.
Illius hinc corpus morti datur, atque cruore
Tingitur: Hæc operis semita vera tui est.

Dd DRACO-

Emblem No. 50 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens, hoc est, emblemata nova de secretis naturae chymica;* (Atalanta flees, presenting new emblems of the chemical secrets of nature). Oppenheim, printed by Hieronymus Galler for engraver Johann Theodore de Bry. (Artwork courtesy of Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

First, Maier compares the brotherhood to the "philosophical colleges" of Egypt (whose members were alchemists), the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries, the Samothracian Cabiri, the Magi of Persia, the Brahmins of India, the Gymnosophists of India, and, of course, the Pythagoreans. Those colleges were established to teach the deeper mysteries of nature (which usually means alchemy in Maier's book). Maier then says it was better that the Rosicrucians did reveal themselves rather than being forever veiled; nonetheless, one should expect them to observe the silence regarding such mysteries advocated by Pythagoras. The silence proves that they're part of the "real thing." After all, we know the Egyptian mysteries existed, but it would take a Michael Maier book to explain them to us. (He did, in *Arcana*

arcanissimai [The most profound secrets]; 1614). The fact is that the Rosicrucians were playing on his turf, and he could either oppose them or use them.


EMBLEMA VI. *De secretis Naturæ.* 33

Seminate aurum vestrum in terram albam foliatam.

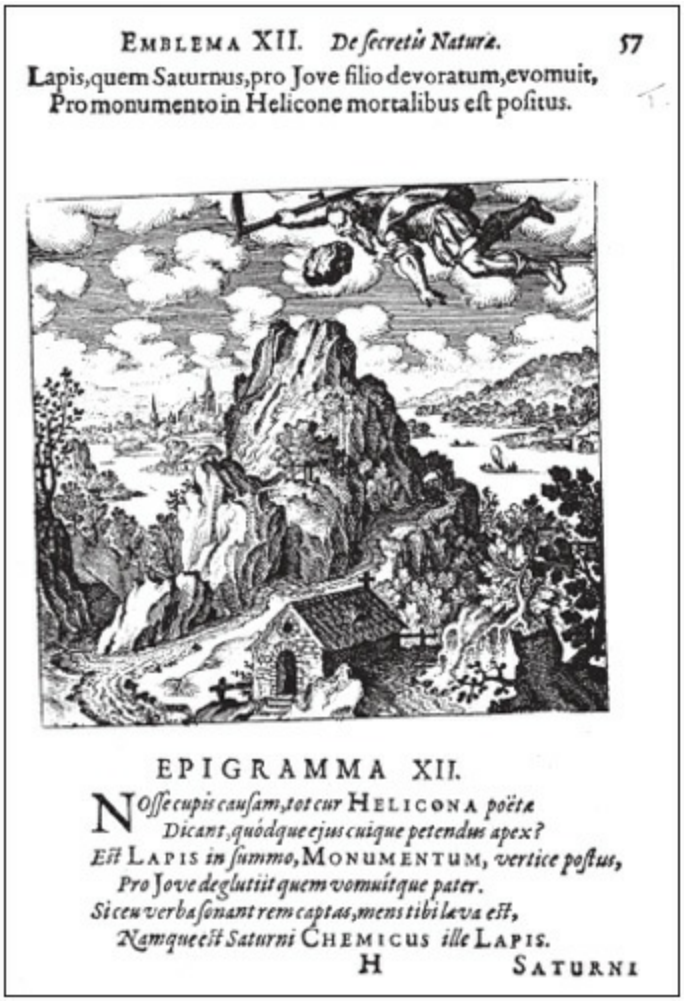
EPIGRAMMA VI.

RUricolæ pingui mandant sua semina terræ,
Cùm fuerit rastris hæc foliata suis.
Philosophi niveos aurum docuère per agros
Spargere, qui folii se levis instar habent:
Hoc ut agas, illud bene respice, namque quod aurum
Germinet, ex tritico videris, ut speculo.

E PLATO

Emblem No. 6 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*.

Opposition might not have been a good move. He was trying to get patronage from the court of Moritz von Hessen after the demise of Rudolf II (for whom he had worked) in 1612. He did not achieve the position of Medicus und Chymicus von Hauß aus at the court of the landgrave Moritz von Hessen until 1618 (the position lasted for only three years). Maier knew the manifestos had been printed with the approval of the landgrave Moritz, so it would have compromised his position to bite the hand that he hoped would feed him.



EMBLEMA XII. *De secretis Naturæ.* 57

Lapis, quem Saturnus, pro Jove filio devoratum, evomuit,
Pro monumento in Helicone mortalibus est positus.

EPIGRAMMA XII.

NOsse cupis causam, tot cur HELICONA poëtæ
Dicant, quódque ejus cuique petendus apex?
Est LAPIS in summo, MONUMENTUM, vertice positus,
Pro Jove deglutiit quem vomuitque pater.
Si ceu verba sonant rem captas, mens tibi læva est,
Namque est Saturni CHEMICUS ille LAPIS.

H SATURNI

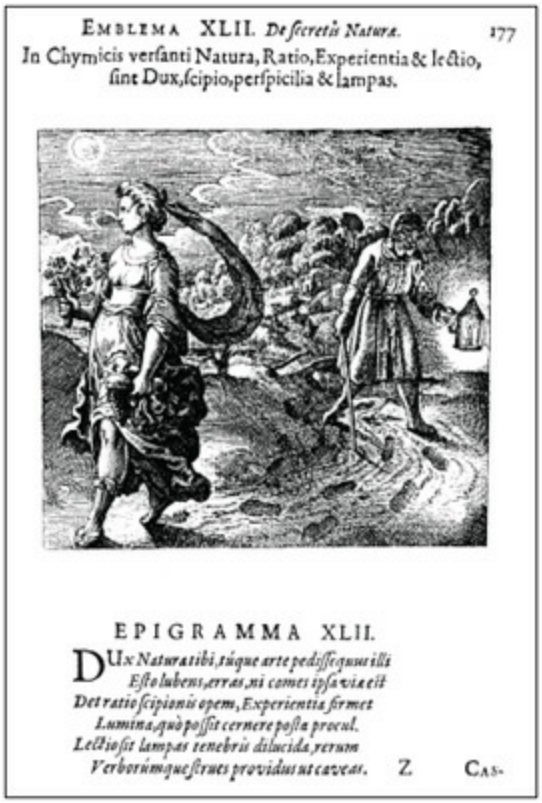
Emblem No. 12 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*.

Maier does not even convince himself with his arguments as to why replies have not, as far as can be told, been received. Certainly, many who approached the brotherhood were plainly unworthy. The applicants revealed their own states of mind by asking for things from the brotherhood. But the brotherhood had said that it would grant good things to the sincere. Some persons must have been sincere.

Maier goes on to say that all this begging is not the important matter while weightier substantial interests are calling. "Nature is yet but half unveiled," he says. What people should really be wanting from the Rosicrucians is experiment. We should be grateful to the Rosicrucians in supplying this want. The important thing is the Universal Medicine.

Now *here*, Maier implies, is where a thorough reading of the works of Michael Maier could really help you, because *this* is a subject he has at his

fingertips; but he, like the Rosicrucians, is not bound to dispose of sacred powers of this magnitude to the unworthy. Besides, the Greeks, Egyptians, and Arabians had secret societies, and being secret is really a proof of their moral value, for how could bad men ever maintain secrecy? A large mouth and a low moral outlook go together. Self-discipline is vital. Many are called, but few are chosen. There is surely a five-year probationary period before applicants are deemed acceptable. The rose is a remote prize, for sure, but the cross is imposed on all those who enter. Treat the brotherhood with profound respect, says Maier. The contents of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis* are true! Five years are necessary even for toplevel initiates. The mysteries are so profound, so remote from those vulgar who would destroy anything good as soon as look at it, five years alone is necessary to learn how to govern the tongue.


EMBLEMA XLII. *De secretis Naturæ.* 177

In Chymicis versanti Natura, Ratio, Experientia & lectio, sint Dux, scipio, perspicilia & lampas.

EPIGRAMMA XLII.

DUx Natura tibi, sitque arte peditisequus illis
Esto lubens, errasne, nisi comes ipsa via est
Det ratio scipionis opem, Experientia firmet
Lumina, quò possit cernere posta procul.
Lectio sit lampas tenebris dilucida, rerum
Verborumque strues providus ut caveas. Z. CAS.

Emblem No. 42 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*.

It is interesting to note that in Freemasonry, learning to keep one's membership a secret is deemed a first principle in acquiring appropriate levels of moral virtue. If you can't keep such a small thing a secret, how

could you be trusted with the hidden destiny of God's will for the human race?

The following year, Maier decided to publish the laws of the fraternity in his book *Themis aurea* (Golden Themis; Frankfurt, Lucas Jennis, 1618). The title is an allusion to the myth whereby the goddess Themis, after the Deluge, is asked how humankind might be restored to the Earth. Themis tells her interlocutors (who, in Maier's rendering, represent, as always, alchemical processes and substances; in this case, the sun and moon) to throw over their shoulders the bones of the Great Mother. These "bones" are the alchemical "stones" produced by the rays of sun and moon in the Earth. So the title refers to alchemical fecundity, the fertility of the good. This is what the fraternity possesses and promotes. This is Hermetic knowledge to be kept by a spiritually purified elite, free from the rabble.

This theme of an elite grouping of spiritual gnostics of civilization may justly be claimed as a legacy of the Maier point of view for the subsequent development of Rosicrucianism. It is particularly noticeable in the philosophy underlying the late-eighteenth-century German Gold- und Rosenkreuzer movement, a movement that relied heavily on the alchemical interpretation of the Rose Cross. However, it is arguable that this view was inherent in the Rosicrucian manifestos themselves, as well as being a view shared by Robert Fludd. Obviously, this theme also makes grand selfpromotion for the author. If you want to know what the elite is thinking, *read Michael Maier*, and patronize him with respect and gratitude. He who has served well is always of service.

Anyhow, Maier's rendering of the laws of the fraternity is precisely those contained in the *Fama*. The brothers follow the inspiration of Themis, goddess symbolizing universal virtue, universal justice. As if to make up for the lack of fresh meat on the subject of the Rosicrucians themselves, Maier goes on to speak of the vices common to the trade and art of medicine. These are not to be found among the brothers—nor, by extension, in his own work, which recognizes virtue and medicinal comprehensiveness. The brothers are simply a society of men, "very laborious, frugal, temperate, secret, true." Not, in fact, unlike Count Michael Maier.

EMBLEMA XXI. *De secretu Natura.* 93

Fac ex mare & fœmina circulum, inde quadrangulum, hinc trian gulum, fac circulum & habebis lap. Philosophorum.

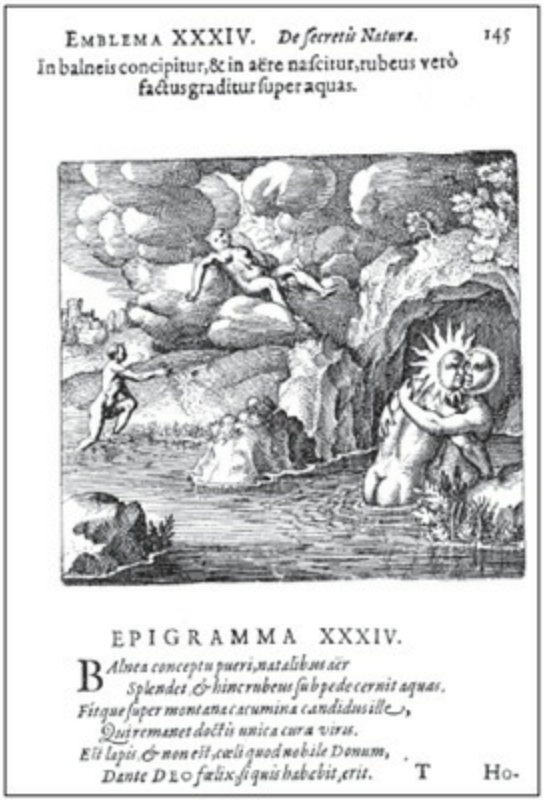
EPIGRAMMA XXI.

Fœmina másque unus fiant tibi circulus, ex que
Surgat, habens æquum forma quadrata latus.
Hinc Trigonum ducas, omni qui parte rotundam
In sphæram redeat: Tum LAPIS ortus erit.
Si rei tanta tua non mox venit obvia menti,
Dogma Geometra si capis, amne scies. M 3 PLA

Emblem No. 21 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*.

Maier takes the account of *frater C.R.* literally but does speculate that the letters *C* and *R*, while they might mean "Rose" and "Cross," might also mean "Pegasus" and "Iulium," if you look not to the letter but "right interpretation": "Is not this a claw of a rosy lion—a drop of Hippocrene?" "To live amidst Roses and under a Cross are contrary things—joy and sorrow." We are to take away these fluxions of a symbolic star and think about them.

While some readers may think the treatment of Maier above is somewhat cynical, it should be said that there was never anything reported of Maier that might be used to denigrate the virtue, energy, and Christian ethic of a man devoted to his craft, who gave it his all, and who, in that sense, was as good as any imaginary Rosicrucian Brother. Indeed, a world of real Michael Maiers will always be better off than a world of imaginary Rosicrucians. Maier was, as Jennis wrote of him in the *Colloquium rhodostauroticum* (Rosy cross conference) of 1624, published two years after his death, a *Regni Christi frater*, a Brother of Christ the King, a phrase that would have delighted the creator of the *Fama*, Johann Valentin Andreae.



EMBLEMA XXXIV. *De secretiù Natura.* 145

In balneis concipitur, & in aëre nascitur, rubeus verò factus graditur super aquas.

EPIGRAMMA XXXIV.

Albea conceptu pueri, natalibus aër
Splendet, & hinc rubeus subpede cernit aquas.
Fitque super montana cacumina candidus ille,
Qui remanet doctis unica cura viris.
Eli lapis, & non est, cœli quod nobile Donum,
Dante DEO fœlix si quis habebit, erit. T Ho-

Emblem No. 34 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*.

Maier was a Hermetic philosopher, not a Christian missionary. He saw the mystery of death and resurrection as a permanent reality visible to the eye of *gnosis* throughout all nature, as well as in the life of human conscience, wherein a better, more refined spirit is distilled through earthly experience. Thus, the "first matter" of the alchemical Work is unvalued in the eyes of the world. "He became as we are that we may be as He is," an aphorism attributed to Athanasius (fourth century AD), might serve also to describe the essential alchemical work. Whether Maier himself would have approved of the thoroughgoing combination of Christian mysticism and alchemy as practiced among the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer a century and a half after his death is open to question—but such as were enthusiastic about this combination would become Maier's readers of the future.

Needless to say, Maier's Hermetic quietists could not be more axiomatically opposed to the kind of social reformation proposed by Philip Ziegler. Ziegler took the call for total reformation to extremes, but social welfare and progress were nonetheless advocated more moderately by others inspired by the Rosicrucian manifestos, and who had witnessed tyrannies at

first hand (men such as Samuel Hartlib and Johann Amos Comensky). Maier could be addressing Ziegler directly in the following quotation from the *Themis aurea:*

> That the brethren of R.C. do neither dream of, hope for, or engage in any Reformation of the world by Religion, the Conversion of the Jews or by the policies of Enthusiasts, which seemingly would be established by Scripture, but that they both acknowledge and show themselves lovers of truth and justice. . . . Such causes have produced many tumults and confusions in commonwealths, where men have acted by vain thoughts and foolish dreams, as it evidently appears in Anabaptists and Enthusiasts. Are there not many, even in this our age, who, being ambitious to be ringleaders in new ways, instead of a Reformation have disturbed all Order and Law.

The allusion here is to the devastating, bloody events surrounding the declaration of the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster in 1535, but also, there can be no doubt that the allusion is intended to refer to the appropriation of the Rosicrucian cause by such as Ziegler. In that sense, we can see another purpose behind the publication of the *Themis aurea:* propaganda for the essentially law-abiding, obedient, virtuous quality of citizenship inseparable from the order of the brotherhood. This was, it must be said, a powerful and politically timely message. Was this opposition to activism intended to calm the nerves of such as Moritz von Hessen, who may have been wondering what kind of tiger might next leap out from the University of Marburg or the presses of Frankfurt in his domain? What was good for the sovereign goose was not good for the proletarian gander in the streets.

The plea for moderation would be heard well enough in England when the *Themis aurea* was published in English in 1656. These very phrases doubtless echoed very well with those familiar with the “old charges” (rules) of Freemasons, who were likewise enjoined to be no threat to the civil power. (When James Anderson put together his government-appeasing *Constitutions of the Free-masons* in 1723, the above quotation was almost paraphrased in its appeal to apolitical acquiescence and social sanity.) But more than this, it may be argued that Maier’s corrective to “enthusiasm” has another

implication, namely, the formulation of a program for steady evolution of society *from within*. While on the one hand this might be defended as no more than a call to being the "leaven in the bread" that Christ requested his disciples to be, it may also imply or justify a covert program of long-term social, religious, and political evolution. If such a fecund idea may be laid at the door of Michael Maier, then Maier's contribution to the development of Rosicrucianism may be more significant than one might have first thought. However, such a responsibility would be difficult to prove for certain.

EMBLEMA XXXVIII. *De secretis Naturæ.* 161

Rebis, ut Hermaphroditus, nasciturex duobus montibus, Mercurii & Veneris.

EPIGRAMMA XXXVIII.

REm geminam REBIS veteres dixêre, quod unus
Corpore sit mas hæc fœminâque, Androgyna.
Natus enim binis in montibus HERMAPHRODITUS
Dicitur, Hermetiquem tulit alma Venus.
Ancipitem sexum ne spernas, nam tibi Regem
Mas idem, mulierque una cadémque dabit.

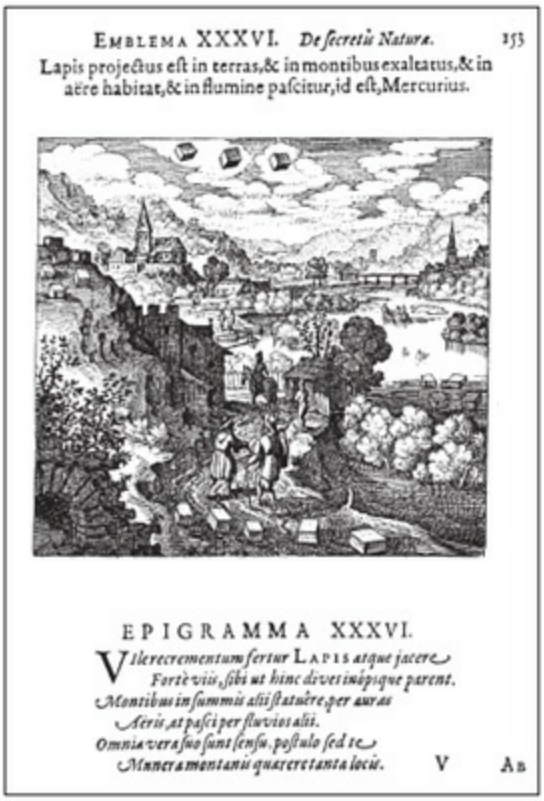
X So.

Emblem No. 38 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*.

In the *Themis aurea*, Maier does suggest that physicians, for example, might exercise influence over important patrons. Åkerman interprets this as implying that the fraternity should "stay" a "theosophical theocracy," invisible, without pubic involvement but with great effective behind-the-scenes influence. Such a view was certainly encouraged in the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer movement and in some bodies that followed the works of Louis Claude de St.-Martin (1743–1803). All these groups read Maier. However, there is no evidence in Maier's work to suggest he had thought out any kind of program for anything resembling a "theosophical theocracy," nor indeed that he was thinking of anything like the Freemasonry that developed

a century after his death. He was thinking about events in his own time, not a century hence.

He saw the destructive effects of radicalism, preferred classicism to biblicism, and shared with Robert Fludd (unknown to each other, as far as we can tell) an interest in halting the decline in the seven liberal arts (essential to the eighteenth-century Freemasons' second degree) and in securing the practical arts and crafts for guidance from the wisest and least troublesome pillars of society. He obviously saw the R.C. Brothers as a kind of moral template that needed explaining before the millenarian hotheads started a war in the name of something they did not understand.


EMBLEMA XXXVI. *De secretis Natura.* 153

Lapis projectus est in terras, & in montibus exaltatus, & in aëre habitat, & in flumine pascitur, id est, Mercurius.

EPIGRAMMA XXXVI.

Vile recrementum fertur LAPIS *atque jacere*
Fortè viis, sibi ut hinc dives inópique parent.
Montibus in summis alii statuêre, per auras
Aëris at pasci per fluvios alii.
Omnia vera suo sunt sensu, postulo sed te
Munera mentanis quærere tanta locis.

V AB

Emblem No. 36 from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*.

A Renaissance man, gifted with a genius for profundity and allusive mystery, Maier would probably dismiss the radicals' common sense as being simply too common. When Maier saw what was most common in the world, he saw the raw material of transmutation.

Maier's first love was gold.

ROBERT FLUDD

Dr. Robert Fludd was born in Kent in 1574. His name has loomed large in Rosicrucian studies for reasons very similar to those that have elevated Michael Maier. It is simply impossible to avoid the massive visual impression made by the engravings undertaken by the de Bry atelier at Oppenheim in the Palatinate for Fludd's pansophic publishing enterprises (especially the *Utriusque cosmi . . . historia*, or *History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm*, in five tractates, 1617–24).

Anyone with the vaguest interest in the subject has most likely seen the image of "Vitruvian Man" turning on a cosmic wheel with the light of God shining above his head, while his limbs extend toward the holiest rims of the macrocosm. The illustrations to these works speak volumes about the grandness of the pansophic learning enterprise, the union of theosophy and natural philosophy in a single, integrated system. To call the system "holistic" hardly does the ambition behind the work justice. It was a bold and wonderful enterprise, though in retrospect, pansophy inevitably bit off more than it could chew. Yet it looked to the future; it marked out the incredible territory ahead that would lead from fanciful conceptions of cosmic all-knowledge to humans walking on the moon in three and a half centuries.

Fludd was clearly a man with vision, and he could obviously see it in another. He saw it in the Rosicrucian manifestos sometime between about 1612 and 1616. His mainstream work was trying to show, in an encyclopedic manner, metaphysics and cosmic origins, arts and sciences, spiritual psychology, psychological sciences, theosophy and Cabala, anatomy, architecture, meteorology and cosmology, the cause of diseases (winds and demons), diagnosis by astrology and uroscopy, as interdependent parts of a unified system. It has to be said that specifically Rosicrucian ideas constituted a small part of his literary endeavors.

Second volume of Dr. Robert Fludd's *History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm*; Oppenheim, printed by Hieronymus Galler for J. Theodore de Bry, 1619.

Fludd's main contribution to the movement was in defending the Rosicrucians against attack—and thereby deserving their endorsement. While he may be accused of basking in the brotherhood's reflected glory, Fludd was nonetheless one of those men who does not shirk from a fight; he had courage. As an ancestor of mine wrote, "The only thing worth contending for is the truth." I rather think Fludd felt that way, and so for him, defending the Rosicrucians was a way of asserting the truth. The reason for this was that the kind of attacks made on the Rosicrucian writings could equally be made on his own work.

Portrait of Dr. Robert Fludd. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Fludd's Hermetic, Platonist, and cabalistically interpreted biblical foundations were vulnerable to rationalist-type and Aristotelian attack. Fludd believed in invisible cosmic forces, some of a purely natural kind and some of a demonic kind. We could say that Fludd, like most people in his time, believed in fairies.

While Fludd's extensive travels in Europe after he graduated from St. John's College, Oxford, led him to a detailed knowledge of fortifications, music, astrology, geomancy, mathematics, architecture, and surveying, he also acquired a powerful interest in Paracelsian medicine at a time when such studies were not looked on kindly by the British medical establishment, any more than they were in most parts of Europe where the old guard held sway.

Fludd was also (1602–?) mathematics tutor in the military arts to Charles de Lorraine and François Alexandre de Lorraine, sons of Henri de Guise. This experience would have given him much insight into the highest levels of Continental politics and philosophy.

On a more mundane level, it would be remiss not to mention Fludd's advocacy of the famous "weapon salve." This healing method required that the weapon that had caused a wound be treated rather than the wound itself. This was based on the theory of hermetic sympathy, or the medical application of the principle "love your enemy." He claimed great success with a method that must have looked, even to those who believed in fairies,

like pure magic or pure quackery.

Fludd never doubted that many diseases had occult or hidden causes and therefore required occult remedies. Nevertheless, this does not mean that he was not equally interested in basic empirical and experimental methodology. He was friendly with William Harvey (who discovered the process of blood circulation) and followed his work closely.

Fludd did not take rejection lying down; it took him four years to be admitted to the London College of Physicians (1609), chiefly as a result of his insolent attitude, so he knew all about what he saw as good men being rejected by those who failed to recognize the true value of things. For all his bad manners in the face of oppositional authority, he was also famed for a curative bedside manner, believing as he did in the power of speech and prayer to enhance treatment.

If anyone in England should come forth to defend the *fratres R.C.*, it was going to be Fludd. He had Continental experience and got the message. As far as he was concerned, he knew where they were coming from. Fludd's *Apologia compendaria, Fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce suspicionis et infamiae maculis aspersam, veritas quasi fluctibus abluens et abstergens* (Summary apology for the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, sullied with stains of suspicion and infamy, but cleansed with the waters of truth; Leiden, Godefroid Basson, 1616) established the first fight. It was with German Lutheran alchemist Andreas Libavius. Libavius had read the two manifestos and *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz* (Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1616) and fulminated against their heresy, diabolical magic, and seditious muckraking.

Libavius's *Analysis confessionis Fraternitatis de Rosea Cruce* (Analysis of the confession of the Rosycross Fraternity; Frankfurt, 1615) threatened to tear away the metaphysical ground from under Fludd's (and the Rosicrucians') feet. Libavius reckoned it all boiled down to the effect of letting Hebrew conceptions influence Christianity. Christianity did not need a universal system of esoteric signs or hidden meanings. Supernal signs were not there for Christians to interpret. It was folly to speak of celestial signs having effects in the sublunary world without divine guidance or sanction. All that speculation about new stars and Serpentarius and Cygnus was impious. As Jesus said, "A wicked generation seeks for signs."

On the contrary, fumed Fludd, the brethren are not wicked! Sound learning showed that the effects of stellar signs could be studied through numerology and other cognate sciences. Numerology illuminated earthly and heavenly proportions without invoking angels or evoking demons. That is to say, black magic had nothing to do with it. The Rosicrucians used natural philosophy, mathematics, or "natural magic": good and wholesome and blessed by the best thinkers from Ficino to Pico della Mirandola.

To the gibe that the Rose Cross Brothers smacked of knowing more than the best theologians, Fludd might have replied, "And who *are* the best theologians?" And here, perhaps, we might come to the nub of the matter. Libavius was, in attacking the pretentious (as he saw it) "new science," simply defending the old theology.

Fludd then suggested the Rosicrcucians had better protect their secrets more carefully in future, lest bigots like Libavius cover them with the foul pitch of learned ignorance. This view rather chimed in with that of Maier, who also thought the fraternity had good reason to reserve its knowledge for those best able to respond positively to it. There then follows an interesting remark that seems to have been taken up a century later when the idea of a Gold and Rosenkreuz movement began to take shape in the mind of Protestant pastor Samuel Richter.

Fludd reckoned the Rosicricians really embodied two schools: one of "*Aureae cruces fratres*," dealing with the supercelestial world, and the other of "*Roseae cruces fratres*," whose task was to deal with the sublunary world (ours). This idea is left hanging somewhat. What could it mean? It would appear to be linked to Fludd's Pauline notion of a heavenly counterpart to the earthly temple. The template to build the holy temple in the being of the good brother is laid up in perfection in the supercelestial world—the world beyond the stars. Its influence comes to us through the rays of the stars that contain the spiritual effulgence of heaven: the holy dew or manna, which alchemists may dutifully collect. It is supposed that the living representatives of the house of the Rosy Cross, while being well suited to this world, nonetheless rely on those brethren (in flesh or out of it?) who have access to, or reside in, the golden realm of pure spiritual perfection.

Anyone who understands the message of the manifestos may immediately feel the presence of the higher being, the gold that no alchemist can make,

only that heavenly gold that can itself transmute and heal the stricken brother. This gold is from above, and that is where the brethren of the Rose Cross derive their wisdom and their authority.

There can then be little doubt that Fludd identified himself with the brotherhood at a very deep level, and we may suppose that his drive to have his pansophic works published to such a high degree of artistic and technical finish was to some extent inspired by the idea of imminent reform and a holy establishment of golden knowledge. The frontispieces to his most compendious volumes seem to announce that the golden age has arrived. New schools will need new texts. These Fludd saw himself as providing.

An exalted and hypersensitive Fludd informed Libavius in no uncertain terms that he did not know what he was talking about. Contrary to the foul suggestions of Libavius, the brothers were all good Christians, devoted to the renovation of the spirit of Christ in the soul of wayward humanity, while their promises could all be fulfilled by knowledge of subjects that he, Fludd, knew perfectly well and could vouch for: natural magic, Cabala, and astrology. While acquainting Libavius with the goodness of these arts, Fludd also took the opportunity to make his own application for membership in the order, as he despised carnality, wished to promote education, and was motivated by a thirst for wisdom.

In 1617, Fludd developed his pro-Rosicrcucian stance in a second work, the “Apologetic Tract to Defend the Integrity of the Rosicrucian Society” (Leiden; Basson, 1617). This work gave posterity the very powerful idea that the fraternity’s true home—the House of the Holy Spirit—was in fact a kind of spiritual ideal, very much in tune with St. Paul’s vision of the spiritual house built “without hands,” a temple built within the being of the adept, which (as in R.C’s “compendium of the universe”) reflects the temple of nature without and within (see 1 Cor. 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:1). Did Fludd bring this idea to his consideration of the Rosicrucians from some kind of Masonic experience—or vice versa?

The rose gives its honey to the bees, from *Summum bonum, quod est verum magiae, cabalae, alchymiae, Fratrum Roseae Crucis verorum verae subiectum* (The greatest good, the truth concerning magic, cabala, alchemy, the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross subject to the realities). Joachimus Frizius (Robert Fludd), 1629, including a riposte to the calumnies of Marin Mersenne.

We do not know, but it is true that this idea would have an impact on ideas that would become (if they were not already) essential to the spiritual core of Accepted Freemasonry. Not surprisingly, Fludd has been seen as a possible candidate either for being a Freemason or for somehow introducing Rosicrucianism into Freemasonry. It is a fine hypothesis, and there is a scintilla of circumstantial evidence to go with it, but not enough either to convince a skeptic or to establish a firm theory.

In 1614, Johann Valentin Andreae published a book in Tübingen, the *Collectaneorum mathematicorum decades XI* (Johann Alexander Cellius, 1614). This was a work that showed where Andreae's mind was in the year of the publication of the *Fama*. The book deals with the practical skills of architecture, geometry, mathematics, design, fortification, and complex engineering. Within Andreae's handbook is a drawing, executed by himself, of a "perfect fortification" based on a twelve-point defense scheme. Curiously, this drawing appears in Fludd's *Utriusque cosmi . . . historia*, volume one,[5] "reputedly invented by a German."

That Fludd had access to Andreae's technical work provides a fascinating clue into the communications opportunities existing at the time between Germany and London. That both Andreae and Fludd were thinking of applying new, improved knowledge to the work of architects (master masons) is tantalizing, but that is a long way from suggesting, as the German historian Buhle did in the early nineteenth century, that Rosicrucianism hit British shores around the time Fludd wrote in defense of it; and by 1640—hey

presto!—there was Freemasonry, with an organization and a philosophy.

Well, the Freemasons of Britain did have an organization, and the leading lights of its practice were certainly educated men, so it would be very surprising if they did not take an interest in the latest scientific and spiritual ideas where they had a bearing on their trade. Rosicrucian ideas clearly find a resonance in the world of symbolic building, and even more so in the development of new technologies and the wider use of geometrical skills. (See my book *Freemasonry: The Reality*.)

As Fludd continued to walk tall, his sublime confidence in his own theories and general outlook began to enrage one man in particular, the Jesuit philosopher Marin Mersenne, himself the friend and guide of mathematician René Descartes.

Mersenne despised Hermetic, Platonist, and cabalist philosophy. As far as he was concerned, it all smacked of magic and was as heretical as it was scientifically fanciful. Catholic dogma held the keys to salvation, not gnostic-driven, quasi-scientific idealism. As for science, mathematics should be practiced without metaphysical interference that strayed into the dogmatic territory of the Church.

Mersenne's *Quaestiones celeberrimae in Genesim* . . . (The most famous questions on Genesis . . . ; Paris, 1623) summarized Mersenne's angry debate with Fludd and the whole Rosicrucian package. The book used Genesis as its fundamental text and then proceeded to rip apart the concept of the Harmony of the World of Francesco Giorgi.

Whereas, for example, Fludd identified the cabalist figure of Mettatron (a kind of demiurge sometimes associated with the messiah) with the "soul of the World," equating that with the second person of the Trinity and the Word through which the world was created, Mersenne argued that no support for this view was to be found in the Bible. The holy book had been written without any help from Greek philosophers or magicians.

Fludd thundered back that Hermes was a contemporary of Moses and that Moses and Hermes drank from the same divine cup of inspiration. For Fludd, science confirmed religion. For Mersenne, such a dynamic was totally unacceptable, lest religion rely on science for its truth-value. This debate has some contemporary relevance. Do we expect truth from religion or from science?

Fludd believed that science and religion would always find a harmony, once you had the esoteric light of understanding granted by God. Mersenne claimed the right of truth belonged to the church and scripture alone, without elaborate mystical skills.

It is historically odd that Mersenne backed Descartes, because Descartes removed theological theories from mathematics, thus keeping the church in complete control of theology, while it was Fludd's point of view of psyche, matter, and divinity in harmony that the church would in times ahead come to miss, as science began to leave religion with less and less space to maneuver. However, it could be argued, on its conduct to date, that the Catholic Church would rather find itself cut off from science altogether than ever admit that it was wrong to oppose and persecute the gnostic tradition. Is science necessary to salvation? Would not the Rosicrucian reply: salvation *is* science?

The fact remains, however, that Fludd's ideal of science and art would, in less than a century, look like Rosicrucian science, an outmoded or obscurantist contrivance relying on ideal (or unreal) sequences and (imaginary) harmonies. It would be considered of interest to esotericists concerned with inner dimensions of experience, but—in the wake of Newton's Principia—not something to teach the children. But Fludd's work *was* science in its day, and the debates he got into with Libavius, Mersenne, Kepler, and others were scientific debates, even though the points of contention may appear irrelevant to many now.

It is also the case that Fludd's worldview was one of privileged insight into spiritual determinants and had drawn so much on broadly gnostic and Neoplatonic sources that his pansophy was fundamentally esoteric, concerned with the soul and the spirit. (He presumed a lot of this knowledge in his readers.) Descartes's legacy would in time cut immeasurables such as soul and spirit out of the mainstream of science and in doing so take the human psyche out of nature and the cosmos. (It is worth bearing in mind that this work appeared when Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was a brand-new play.)

However, it is nowadays argued that this process has left humankind in a new jeopardy. We are no longer sure of what our relationship with nature really should be. We have spent so long "conquering" it that we have, in a sense, taken the world beneath our feet. We now stand with all our inner life locked in and blocked off. We stand, as it were, in the vacuum of our own

desires.

Filling the vacuum with fundamentalist pseudo-certainties will not help. Closing one’s ears and loss of sense are simultaneous experiences. The continued preservation of Fludd’s apparently outdated and scientifically naive vision by Rosicrucian circles of admirers has given us all an opportunity to receive an insight into what a harmonious spiritual and material universe might look like, when the numbers on which it is constructed are, as it were, colored in.

Put another way, if you had the choice of constructing a popular movie around one of two figures—Mersenne or Fludd—which would you choose? Who would give more meat for the scriptwriter and more pleasure for the actor? I do not think you would be looking for a French actor for the lead role.

TEN

ROSYMANIA II

Educating the World

If there is one subject that positively unites the main figures of the early Rosicrucian story, it must be mechanics. Andreae, Dee, Fludd, and Hess, to name but a few, all enjoyed the objectification of science exemplified in machines and startling gadgets that people could touch and measure their ingenuity against. The spirit and pleasure of invention were alive in these men.

SIR FRANCIS BACON

The same spirit enlivened the difficult life of Sir Francis Bacon, another collector of mechanical marvels and a man who for many years in the annals of Rosicrucian "hero lists" has figured as some kind of a Rosicrucian. The name of Bacon has been used to add luster to the value of Rosicrucian ideas within the movements that have joined themselves to the original explosion of the manifestos in the early seventeenth century.

This may be because Bacon's contribution to modern scientific attitudes has been recognized, whereas the Rosicrucians' has not, in spite of the valiant attempts of Dame Frances Yates (*Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 1964; *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, 1972) and Joscelyn Godwin, among others.

Since the definitive experience of modern science was, for the historians of science, the break with magic, such historians have never, and probably will never, accept that modern science owes anything more to magic than a few

battered relics that began life in magic's superstitious attic, such as the existence of chemicals and an interest in numbers, signs, and energy. The "natural magicians" simply had the wrong perception of these things.

It is a sterile argument.

There must be something about the British nature that really likes to permit only one genius per generation. The Germans are happy with a coterie of brilliance, or so it seems, but the competitive and hierarchical spirit of the British Isles favors the notion of the single established master in the field. We want democracy among the followers and autocracy in the leader. Thus, it has seemed to some people that Bacon must have written the works of Shakespeare for little better primary reason than that they were both contemporaries and both magisterially clever and original minds.

Perhaps it is for similar reasons that observers of Rosicrucianism have taken the view that Bacon's ideas and activities have so much in common with those of the Rosicrucian movement that one must have influenced or directed the other, or, more specifically, that Bacon was a secret Rosicrucian.

The evidence does not bear this out. Bacon, like Johann Valentin Andreae, was undoubtedly a maverick, a brilliant and original mind. They were both keenly aware of the shortcomings of their times, and both proposed original ways of coping with the intellectual and spiritual shortfall of their era. They were active within an overlapping period (Bacon was twenty-five years older than Andreae, having been born in 1561). Nevertheless, the facts suggest that while each may well have been aware of the work of the other, they worked at their own grindstones in their own way, with their own priorities. In retrospect, it does look like their separate grindstones were in fact parts of a larger one held in common, but that is with gift of hindsight.

Francis Bacon published his book *The Advancement of Learning* in 1605 when Andreae was still thinking in terms of Christian alchemical romances. Bacon had in mind a clearing up of the knowledge base, a revised system of classification, a removal of humbug and unnecessary, redundant, or obscure categories and generalizations. Unlike Descartes, Bacon set much store in direct sense experience and in the virtues of experiment.

In the following passage from *The Advancement of Learning*, for example, Bacon appears to be taking an empiricist sideswipe at the ray theory of Roger Bacon and al-Kindi (taken for granted as the astrochemical basis for the

Rosicrucian manifestos), while at the same time asserting his own ideas about how much inherited and stubborn modes of thought obstruct the clear perception of phenomena: “For the mind of man is far from the nature of a clear and equal glass wherein the beams of things should reflect according to their true incidence; nay, it is rather like an enchanted glass, full of superstition and imposture, if it be not delivered and reduced.”[1]

That word *imposture* was a favorite of Bacon’s, and there can be little doubt it was taken up by Newton when Newton over half a century later himself applied it to the fictional story of the *fratres R.C.* Bacon wanted the senses to be uninhibited by illusions. This was a theme of Bacon’s work the *Novum organum* (A new instrument), published in 1620. The *Novum organum* listed over fifty aphorisms concerning the “idols,” meaning illusions, that restrict clear perception and hinder the experimental approach to nature.

In chapter five of book 1 of the *Novum organum* (“Aphorisms Concerning the Interpretation of Nature and the Kingdom of Man”), Bacon makes this comment: “The study of nature with a view to works is engaged in by the mechanic, the mathematician, the physician, the alchemist, and the magician; but by all (as things now are) with slight endeavour and scanty success.” Bacon was not being strictly accurate here. Technology was advancing rapidly; Kepler and Galileo, Harvey and Gilbert had all made great advances in astronomy and physiology, respectively. Clearly, Bacon thought there would be better results to be gained from taking his advice and following his method.

It is tempting to take his stricture as most concerning the latter two activities: alchemy and magic. It is certain that Bacon was not impressed with the theories accorded to Paracelsus. He asserted that the microcosm/macrocosm theory had been strained beyond its limits to the point of absurdity by Paracelsus and his followers. Thus, he was skeptical that the position of a certain planet might affect a particular organ in a particular individual at a particular time.

In his *Advancement of Learning* (II, VIII, 3), Bacon condemned the “credulous and superstitious conceits and observations of sympathies and antipathies [the Hermetic correspondence theory], and hidden properties” of “natural magic.” The same idea is promulgated in *De augmentis* (Concerning

growth, III, v) and *Novum organum* (I, 85, 87). However, it is important to recognize that Bacon's reservations on these subjects would have been shared by Andreae, if not by many of the supporters of the Rosicrucian manifestos. The Rosicrucian declarations do not favor any single path to scientific knowledge, only advocating that people of learning share their discoveries openly and in the light of a sole devotion to truth, not pet, antique, or novel theory.

Bacon thought of the possibility of the Great Instauration, a magnificent plan for the renewal of the sciences, the renovation of learning. This vision is undoubtedly shared in the *Fama Fraternitatis*, where it has a more "golden age" coloring.

Bacon might have carped, "Well, why not put it simply? Why all the imposture about Christian Rosenkreuz and so on?" One must consider that there was method in Andreae's alleged mischief or imposture. When Bacon set himself the task of showing what a Christian civilization that had mastered scientific knowledge and method would be like, he too felt constrained to use the language of fiction and of the ideal, with all that that risk entailed in terms of others taking advantage of "imposture" (which they did). Bacon's *New Atlantis* appeared in the same volume as *Sylva sylvarum* (The forest of materials) in 1627, a year after Bacon's death.

No informed reader confronting Bacon's *New Atlantis* could be in much doubt that its author had at some time read the Fama Fraternitatis or heard its story and, quite possibly, Andreae's *Christianopolis* too. If Bacon gave Andreae a licking with his original *Advancement of Learning*, Andreae had, as it were, repaid the compliment by 1627.

Christianopolis (1619), which described a perfectly harmonious Christian civilization, full of learning and protected by angels, was discovered, according to its fantasy narrative, on an island called Caphar Salama. The Hebrew *shalom*, for peace, is also included in Bensalem, the name of Bacon's imaginary island of scientific and social harmony governed by godly wisdom. Bensalem, as its name implies, is a kind of earthly counterpart or child of the heavenly New Jerusalem. Nevertheless, Bacon's theological interest was nowhere nearly so important to what he had to say as it was to Andreae, who was, by then, a Lutheran minister. On the other hand, it would be a gross error to impart the idea of secular science to Bacon's conception. What

Bacon's island lacks in theology, it makes up for in technology, Bacon's great interest.

BACON'S NEW ATLANTIS AND THE *FAMA FRATERNITATIS*

Shared incidentals with the *Fama Fraternitatis* are as follows:

The English visitors to Bensalem are shown a scroll: "This scroll was signed with a stamp of cherubim's wings, not spread, but hanging downwards; and by them a cross." This image has naturally been compared to the closing biblical "motto" from the *Fama*: "Under the shadow of thy wings, Jehova." The cross resonates with the signature of the *fratres R.C.* who venerate the cross.

The description of the official who first greets the visitors resonates with the idea of the "wise of Damcar" who greet *frater C.R.*: "His hat, being in the form of a turban, daintily made, and not so huge as the Turkish turbans; and the locks of his hair came down below the brims of it. A reverend man was he to behold." Furthermore, "He gave us our oath, 'By the name of Jesus, and His merits.'" This again is reminiscent of the Rosicrucian motto *Jesus mihi omnia*.

The visitors approach the "Strangers' House" where "we had every hour joy of the amendment of our sick, who thought themselves cast into some divine pool of healing, they mended so kindly and so fast." Like the R.C. Brothers, the physicians of the House treat the sick *gratis*—and effectively.

The Strangers' House is, the visitors are told, "at this time rich, and much aforehand, for it hath laid up revenue these thirty-seven years." Thirty-seven is, of course, the numerologically significant figure given by the brethren R.C. for the number of reasons why the brothers are revealing themselves: the very point of the *Confessio Fraternitatis*.

Not only is the healing free, but the visitors will not leave the island empty-handed: "And have your return, either in merchandise or in gold and silver: for to us it is all one." The *Fama* also promised more treasure than the king of Spain might extract from the Indies. Bacon is also making a joke, I think, about what pleases the English most. Had the visitors brought back only wisdom and knowledge—like *frater C.R.*—they would never have

received a hearing. Bensalem sends out Merchants of Light, whose interest (or trade) is knowledge; one is nevertheless sure they do not travel empty-handed in the world.

One of the wise approaches the visitors: “His turban was white with a small red cross on the top.” The red or rosy cross is clearly delineated as a sign. Then, in another echo of the House of the Holy Spirit: “One of our wise men, of the Society of Salomon’s House, which house or college, my good brethren, is the very eye of this kingdom,” delivers a prayer: “Lord God of Heaven and Earth; Thou hast vouchsafed of Thy Grace, to those of our order, to know Thy works of creation, and the Secrets of them; and to discern (as far as appertaineth to the generations of men) between divine miracles, works of Nature, works of art, and impostures and illusions of all sorts.”

Readers will note the word *impostures* and the desire to separate the works of God from the ordinary workings of Nature. One can thus imagine Bacon’s view of the astro-apocalyptic speculations surrounding new stars and planetary conjunctions. Indeed, it should be stressed that Bensalem’s establishment as a Christian society is dated not as a fruit of the golden age to precede the Last Judgment, but as the work of twenty years after Christ’s ascension.

The truth has been long established.

The apocalyptic content of the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* is, notably, entirely absent. Bacon has, it seems, extracted what he considered of value from the elements of imposture. One can only suspect that Andreae would himself applaud the effort, so long as he was not likewise convinced of a hint of impiety in Bacon’s outlook. But Bacon is careful to fully Christianize his Eastern savants in a way that even the *Fama* does not.

Christianity for Bacon seems to mean truth, law, and love—a point of view that may justly be called Christian; and if it is also Rosicrucian, then it can be so only if one recognizes that the Rose Cross of Andreae was simply another way of referring to the Way of Christ, the path to be taken whereon the pilgrim may expect to be wounded.

Bacon next indulges in some wordplay around the name of the lawgiver who, 1,900 years before the arrival of the visitors, gave Bensalem its first laws. “Solamona” gave “the erection and institution of an order, or society, which we call Salomon’s House, the noblest foundation, as we think, that

ever was upon the earth, and the lantern of the kingdom." The "lantern" may be compared to the never-ending light or inner sun that illuminates the tomb of *frater C.R.* in the *Fama*.

King James had many times been compared to King Solomon with respect to his wisdom, learning, judgment—and beard. Bacon may have been suggesting that *he* should be proper adviser to the "new" Solomon. The implication is a comparison with Solomon's Temple, but possibly to protect the implication from any criticism of impiety or religiously motivated bigotry, Bacon leaves the similarity of names open: "Some think it beareth the founder's name [the House, that is] a little corrupted, as if it should be Solamon's House. But the records write it as it is spoken"; "So I take it to be denominate of the king of the Hebrews, which is famous to you"; "This society is sometimes called Salomon's House, and sometimes the College of the Six Days' Works."

Needless to say, this intriguing exercise in namesmanship has been used to suggest that the Royal Society (1660–61) derives its conceptual genesis from the New Atlantis image and idea, and/or that the Royal Society was the fruit of the Rosicrucian *Fama*, either directly or via Bacon's fiction. Again, there would be no great difficulty with this interesting idea were it not for the traditional resistance of British historians of science to attribute anything in the genesis of modern science to the inspiration or example of "occult mentalities" (see Brian Vickers, ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance*). To these historians, the foundation of the Royal Society is the key event. That, however, is only a point of view, long established; but as scientists should know very well, and Bacon taught very directly, a thing thought long does not increase by years its weight of truth.

Things get even more fraught when speculation has addressed the similarity of the name Salomon to one of the traditional "patrons" of Freemasons, namely he who ordered to be made Zion's temple. Bacon's House is not a place of worship in the ordinary understanding of the word. This is probably why Bacon was hesitant in using the name of the Hebrew king in an unqualified way; he alludes to it.

The thinking part of the master Freemasons' company leadership would undoubtedly have found as much to enjoy in Bacon's story as they doubtless did when John Dee's 1570 *Mathematical Preface* to Euclid was dedicated to

the mechanicians of London.

We cannot prove any such thing as “Freemasonry derived from Rosicrucianism,” only that there are such similarities of idea that the two things either developed in complete independence from one another (but reached similar conclusions) or shared in a common pot of extant ideas, familiar to the times. The evidence could support both conclusions, but it cannot demonstrate a *determinative* influence of one stream on the other (see chapter 12). That the streams overlapped seems, in my opinion, most likely. Many mystics have been scientists; many scientists have been mystics (rarely, some Freemasons have been both). Occasionally, society is shocked to find a scientist who is also an atheist, even a militant one, but what does it matter?

So scientists cannot find God through microcscope, telescope, spectroscope, or the like. Whoever said they would? The Bible, for example, tells people to look deeply into the cosmos and ask themselves what kind of being might be responsible for such a thing. Mystics are simply a people who, having answered that question to their own satisfaction, proceed to find evidence for their conclusion in all they see and feel about them. The universe answers the yearning soul—one way or another. For the atheist challenged by the alleged injustice of the world, the universe is a crime without a perpetrator.

All ideas express the limitations of the consciousness of the thinker. If we wish to expand our knowledge, we need to expand our consciousness. If we wish to expand our consciousness, we need to expand our knowledge. The universe gives us lots of space—and time—to think about it.

One thing we can say with certainty, most Rosicrucians, natural scientists, and master freemasons shared a common love of technology. This commonality has not been sufficiently recognized due to the cultural myopia that separates issues of spirit from issues of matter—a Cartesian dualism that we shall inspect in due course.

The Rosicrucian mythology clearly had some small effect on Bacon. Bacon would have some small effect on Rosicrucianism as a literary tradition. They have things in common. They also have important distinctions. One of these is the degree of significance given to mathematics.

If the Royal Society was indeed a fulfillment of Bacon’s “Dream House,”

then he would have been surprised, perhaps, at the great interest in it shown by mathematicians. Saloman's House is chock-full of futuristic technological wonders to be seen in "perspective houses," demonstrating "all lights and radiations." Bacon also envisions flying machines, and submarines for exploring beneath the oceans. This latter point is noteworthy, since one of the respondents (in about 1617) to the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*—calling himself Julianus de Campis—was the Dutch inventor Cornelius Drebbel, who combined an interest in alchemy with a delight in technology. Drebbel came to England, where he delighted the court of King James with his mechanical marvels and designed a submarine, a reconstruction of which may be seen today at Dartmouth's naval museum.

This combination of interests gives us a kind of direct literary line that runs through nearly three centuries to the works of Jules Verne and the development of science fiction. Where would our culture be without the "mad scientist" or genius sent mad by ignorance of his value? In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, even the on-board computer gets sick of being ignored and promptly goes crazy—or becomes excessively logical, depending on your point of view!

After much description of the perspective house and all the extraordinary things therein, Bacon gives only a perfunctory nod to mathematics: "We have also a mathematical-house, where are represented all instruments, as well as geometry or astronomy, exquisitely made." It is the fashioning of instruments that exercises Bacon's imagination; nothing more is said of mathematics.

Bacon is, of course, given a significant portion of the credit for "Baconian experimental method" and for being a founding father of modern science. But he loved his toys as much as the next person; a love of toys seems essential to the development of the scientist. Like children, Bacon's inhabitants of Bensalem (his "den") "hate all impostures and lies." And that is what scientific method in Bacon's wish-world boils down to: the inquisitive child who wants to be told the truth as clearly as possible; who knows the pleasure and limitations of fairy stories but does not like being tricked by those who confuse facts with fiction, or who make false promises or give toys that cannot work.

To encounter the real hard man of modern science, a theorist who suggested a complete break with the past, we have to cross the Channel to

France and locate the elusive René Descartes, last seen ducking accusations that he had himself joined the Invisibles. For Descartes, numbers were his toys, and toys were a kind of distraction. Is it not strange that Descartes also has been considered—even in his lifetime—a Rosicrucian?

RENÉ DESCARTES AND THE NEW MATHEMATICS

René Descartes (1596–1650) is, of course, famous for the gnomic words "I think, therefore I am"—that is to say, the only certain knowledge we have for our existence is that we are thinking about it. This lodging of *being* within the capacity to reason is fundamental to Descartes's peculiar outlook.

Descartes set great store on the reasoning function of people because he believed that that was the most divine aspect of the human being. It is for this reason that Descartes favored mathematics as the most reliable tool available to the reasoning mind. For Descartes, mathematics existed whether he was thinking of it or not. Why? *Because God thought that way.*

God does not have senses as a human being does. Therefore, God's perception of the world must be consistent, to a degree that we cannot perhaps know, with the means by which he created it. In short, God used mathematics, which is a certain form of demonstration, impervious to opinion and consistent in and with itself, unchanging; whereas, by contrast, our senses continually deceive us. Sense experience is dependent on any number of unstable factors. What looks one color during a storm looks different on a bright morning.

Descartes was struck by the promise of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. The *Fama* promised new *axiomata* "whereby all things might be fully restored." On the other hand, these *axiomata* were not, in a profounder sense, new at all: "Our Philosophy also is not a new invention, but as Adam after his fall hath received it, and as Moses and Solomon used it." Descartes took it that the Rose Cross Brothers were promoting a new kind of mathematics, one that would unify the basis of knowledge on infallible and all-encompassing principles. Those principles had been remembered by Adam from the days of creation; mathematics was the answer.

Either it was the case that the brethren R.C. had this already—in which

case Descartes hoped to find it—or the brothers were waiting for the right person to come along and provide it. Either way, the *Fama* spoke to the Jesuit-trained young genius.

Descartes was looking for a unified theory. He understood that only geometrical properties (length, breadth, height, and depth) were essential to matter. Combined with motion, these properties explained natural phenomena rationally.

He recognized that this way of looking at things had little to do with common sense. His physics did not depend on human sense experience but on mathematical facts about material things. These facts could be grasped by minds with otherwise utterly different sense experiences to our own. An alien could, as it were, understand these things, or a god. Thus, Descartes's theory distinguished between properties that things intrinsically possessed—shape and size, for example—and things they only appeared to possess: color, smell, and other sensible qualities.

So in Descartes's new world (or original world), a Paracelsian correspondence between green, copper, and Venus meant absolutely nothing of lasting truth. Descartes decided that mathematics, cloistered and austere in the extreme, was more objective than sense-based conceptions of the world. He could demonstrate clearly, and without saying his way was "*like* God's vision," simply by showing that sense-based experience was highly uncertain and open to doubt, whereas mathematical conception was free from doubt.

Flesh was weak, but mathematics was willing.

Bacon had never gone so far in throwing commonsense assumptions into doubt. Descartes reduced observational experiences to a different, lower category of value, while simultaneously elevating abstraction to the highest level. What was most interesting to people of his time was that Descartes's argument for his method simply attributed the responsibility to God himself. It was God who wanted the human mind to operate without error, free from uncertainty. God's benevolence was intrinsically demonstrated when he conceived the mathematical nature of matter. (This is why Einstein is reported to have opined that God does not throw dice.) Nobody today would doubt that mathematical physics is possible; measurement, prediction, and control through mathematics are inseparable from our world. If part of the responsibility for this development is to be laid at the door of the *fratres R.C.*

—or even the fiction thereof—it would constitute a striking case for the historical relevance, as well as spiritual value, of Andreae's creation.

The turning point in Descartes's life appears to have come after going to Breda in Holland in 1618 and volunteering for service in the army of the Dutch prince Maurice of Nassau. At Breda, he became friends with a Dutch mathematician called Beeckman, who enjoyed many scientific interests and at that period could hardly have been unaware of the Rosicrucian movement. Descartes said Beeckman put him back on the right path after he had wandered from serious matters. He told Beeckman that he intended to give the world a completely new science.

He then traveled all over central Europe with the army. He arrived in Frankfurt in September 1619 in time for the coronation of the emperor Ferdinand, who replaced Matthias. The coronation was of deep concern to Protestants, but not to Descartes, who was a Catholic with other things on his mind. On November 10, 1619, he had a daytime vision in his room. For him, relying not on mathematics but on immeasurables, the vision was a divine revelation of his task in life. He would unfold a *scientia mirabilis*, a wonderful science.

It appears that the basic idea that came to him suddenly was that the four subjects of the old *quadrivium* of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy might be combined, along with optics and mechanics, into a new unity under mathematics. Mathematics then was a kind of new theology: a queen of the sciences.

While living near Ulm, Descartes came into contact with Johann Faulhaber, a pro-Rosicrucian mathematician who wrote a number of responses to the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*. While later trying to disassociate himself from rumors of contact with the Rosicrucians, Descartes asserted that he could find nothing certain in their doctrines (there *was* no specific Rosicrucian doctrine of mathematics).

However, there exist fragments from a notebook made shortly after he left Germany wherein he wrote down his intention to establish "the means of solving all the difficulties in the science of mathematics. . . . The work is offered afresh to learned men throughout the world and especially to the distinguished brothers of the Rose Croix in Germany"; "If we could see how the sciences are linked together, we could find them no harder to retain in our

minds than the series of numbers."[2]

It is arguable that the further account of his realization at Breda and subsequently in part 2 of Descartes's *Discourse on Method* relies for its structure on the theme in the *Fama* wherein the architect, Brother NN, in making repairs to his house, locates, by this method, the perfect "compendium of the universe." Descartes says, "It would be unreasonable for an individual . . . to plan to reform the body of the sciences or the established order of teaching them in the schools." He argues that it would be unreasonable for someone wishing to improve a town to demolish everything in sight. On the other hand, it would make sense for an individual to raze and rebuild his own particular house.[3] In other words, following his allegory (and possibly that of the *Fama*), he could well profit by reforming his own learning and rejecting doubtful acquired beliefs—while leaving the established order intact.

The important thing was to find the right *method* by which one might replace the old, worn-out teachings. One is instantly reminded of the *Fama*'s point that when architect N.N. breaks through into the magical vault, "there shall be a door opened to Europe (when the wall is removed) which already doth begin to appear, and with great desire is expected of many."

Descartes, genius as he was, seized the allegory of the *Fama* explored earlier. He had to pull the nail out from his own thinking. That thinking had come through the Jesuits at his school at La Flèche. He made a point of trying to bring the Jesuits with him as his philosophy expanded and deepened. This was surely a method with which Andreae would have found himself in fundamental accord.

However, it would be a discordant irony were it the case that the *Fama* had somehow catapulted Descartes's mind into the ejection of imagination, intuition, feeling, and sensation from the certain means of divine creation. On that basis, Descartes could no more be a Rosicrucian, as the term would come to mean, than a fish could be a swan. However, one cannot dismiss the possibility that Descartes's physics and metaphysics might be described as a legitimate outcome of the *Fama*'s challenge to its confused times.

DESCARTES AND FAULHABER

At first sight, the brief association of Descartes and Johann Faulhaber (1580–1635) might seem a strange one. According to Susanna Åkerman and extant documents, Johann Faulhaber found in numbers confirmation of certain biblical prophecies. This might seem a long way from a man such as Descartes, who thought of mathematics primarily in terms of its intrinsic constitutional consistency and certainty. Johann Faulhaber was a fine mathematician and also, like the good characters of C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, supported the idea of the establishment of the Lion over the powers of evil.

Faulhaber applied this belief to his treatments of three successive comets, the last appearing in the year of the publication of his pro-Rosicrucian work, Fama siderea nova (Ulm, 1618). Faulhaber was not the only person writing on both comets and the brethren R.C. To his name we must add those of Friedrich Grick, David Fabricius, Ireneaeus Agnostus (Julius Sperber), Peter Nagel (the astrocalendar maker), and Hisisas sub Cruce (Zimpert Wehe of Danzig). Grick, from Nuremberg, and a regular contributor to the debate about the Rosicrucian manifestos, asked the simple, commonsense question with regard to the stellar signs: Why do you have to wait so long for anything to happen? A sensible question.

According to Descartes's Kalendiis Januarii 1619, the French mathematician studied Faulhaber's "table resembling the German Cabala," where Faulhaber treated of "corporeal numbers."[4]

Corporeal numbers are polygonal and pyramidal numbers constructed by mathematical series. For example, a pyramidal number would be a product of factors five, that is: $1 \times 2 \times 4 \times 4 \times 5$, since a pyramid has five points from which projections are taken. The solution would be 120, a number to be found in Genesis 6:3—and, of course, the number written on the entrance to the tomb of *frater C.R.* tomb in the *Fama*. Surely such a consonance of idea was, according to Åkerman, Rosicrucianism! I am not convinced that Rosicrucianism was what people who wrote answers to the manifestos thought it ought to be.

As Christopher McIntosh has maintained, Rosicrucianism is an "egrigore," that is, a dynamic magnet or "rolling stone." According to this analysis, it is whatever successive commentators and believers choose to add to it. I should myself say that either this is the case or it is the case that Rosicrucianism is

properly the thought of its progenitor or progenitors. If it is the former, then C. S. Lewis is as much a Rosicrucian as Johann Faulhaber.

The remaining possibility is that Rosicrucianism is not really a body of ideas at all.

Åkerman is of the opinion that Faulhaber was in some manner generating a particular Rosicrucian mode of mathematical discourse. Thus, in Faulhaber's *Numerus figuratus* . . . (Ulm, 1614), he attempted to locate arithmetical series that coincided with biblically significant numbers: for example, 666 of Revelation 13:18, the thirty-sixth triangular number; 1,335 of Daniel 12:12, the thirtieth pentagonal number; 2,300 of Daniel 8:14, the twentieth tetradecagonal number.

In employing the completed table, Faulhaber achieved new formulas up to the hyperpyramidal numbers of the fourth degree, even for 120, the fifteenth triangular number. Faulhaber was trying to generate a perfect algebraic equation that would, through its consistency with the divine conception of numerical certainty, give the mathematician all the significant years that would occur in the apocalyptic chronology, past, present, and future.

This attempt doubtless gave Descartes much food for thought. But Descartes was troubled by the whole issue of interpretation of significant numbers. He looked for a pure system that made sense regardless of the worldview of the mathematician.

Faulhaber had published his table as a response to the Rosicrucian manifestos before meeting Descartes (*Mysterium arithmeticum* . . . , The mystery of numbers; Ulm, 1615). When this table was combined with the brand-new system of Napier's logarithms, Faulhaber's work affected the English mathematicians—John Pell, Isaac Barrow, and the circle of scientists around Samuel Hartlib—who were also probing the supposed mathematical message of the Apocalypse.

Modern science does not like to hear about this sort of thing, but probing the Apocalypse was a perfectly legitimate exercise of scientific knowledge, even though it had to be exercised discreetly, lest the rabble get overexcited and attack the libraries and instruments of the learned. Prophecy and practicality went together in this period. Thus, many years later we find Johann Faulhaber building fortifications for the Swedes at Donauwörth, while in June 1632, he publishes a prophecy. The prophecy is dark. Based on

a manipulation of figurative numbers, Faulhaber revealed: “The hero will be shot.”

Gustavus Adolphus, Swedish king and Protestant warrior hero—even “Lion of the North”—would be found on the battlefield of Lützen, blood pouring from his chest, from which wounds he soon gave up the ghost.

In Faulhaber’s *Arithmeticus cubicossicus* (Ulm, 1604), the young Faulhaber had used “cossic” or algebraic numbers. These numbers represented cubes and higher powers. “Higher powers” in Faulhaber’s mind had the dual meaning of abstract figures of scale combined with the idea of formulas and signs for superior beings. An “angel” might also be a mathematical factor, a message from an even higher power. Mathematics was regarded as a way of communicating through signs with pure energies that contained specific potencies (expressed as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, for example). Mathematics and Cabala were, in Faulhaber’s mind, practically inseparable. Descartes saw an advantage in separating them.

Nevertheless, Descartes used a variant of Faulhaber’s cossic number system, said to have been acquired in Holland in 1624. According to Åkerman, “Faulhaber’s work at Ulm was crucial to Descartes’ first view of his new system and the encounter apparently led him to philosophise more deeply on the nature of intuitive knowledge claims.”

A treatise on polyhedra was finished by Descartes in 1619: *Prosgymnasmata de solidorum elementis* (Exercises on solid elements; ca. 1620/23). Descartes used ideas from Faulhaber’s methods. Being the better mathematician, he was able to improve on them, but there can be little doubt that it was the creative and brooding atmosphere that had emerged in the meeting with the mind of Faulhaber that culminated in Descartes’s wonderful invention. On St. Martin’s Day, November 10, 1619, Descartes realized that all of nature’s secrets would be opened to him by means of algebra. The hope was utopian, but then so was the source. The step Descartes took as a result was real enough.

It is a perfectly valid inference from surviving evidence that Descartes’s decision to become a vocational mathematician was influenced by contact with Rosicrucian mentalities, culminating in November 1619 with his three “Olympian dreams,” which somehow wrapped up everything he had been

looking for into a cohesive unity that motivated him for the rest of his life.

It would perhaps be pleasant to report that Descartes's experience made of him something like a Rosicrucian. There were aspects in common. He chose to live according to the principle that he who hides well, lives well. Obscurity became him, but the striking character of his thought would not let him alone for long.

In any event, Descartes's method did the Hermetic tradition no favors. His method was to isolate distinctly levels of order and quantity in mathematics. This was essentially a process of pure abstraction that would free the idea of number from Hermetic or symbolic imagination. It might be objected that Descartes was, in the process, contradicting his idea that God communicated most incontrovertibly by number. One thinks of Simon Studion in 1604 suggesting anyone who did not favor his interpretations of biblical numbers should check his figures with mathematician Michael Mästlin.

The problem, I think, was that Descartes, raised at a Jesuit school at La Flèche in the Touraine according to medieval Scholastic methods, had inherited one of the Scholastic prejudices of the past, namely, that numbers were *in themselves* something real, rather than nominal pegs on which one could hang meaning. Quantity is, of course, incontrovertible, but *meaning* is anything but. Descartes attempted to reduce meaning to measurable and incontrovertible categories. As a method of avoiding uncertainty, the method had much to commend it, but as a means of delivering understanding, it was next to useless.

Numbers are, above all, a practical system. Descartes attempted to turn mathematics into philosophy, simply because he did not realize the two disciplines' distinctness, since in his time, natural philosophy included mathematics. Descartes, whether he knew it or not, was responding to the growing feeling that technology, not theology, was to be the pinion of global revolution in the near future. In this he was prophetic and helped make the prophecy come true.

Why, one might have asked at the time, did Descartes lecture God on how much "truth" could be carried by number? It may be argued that number is an arbitrary symbolic system that, within certain parameters, works. Were there not dimensions of numerical significance that were not necessarily certain, as Faulhaber presumed?

Again, within the techno-Rosicrucian paradigm, it was irrelevant what practical process *meant*, so long as you could do it again when called on to demonstrate it.

While Cartesian science was influenced by ideas and principles formulated by millenarian algebra, Descartes preferred an aesthetic of knowledge that discarded the *belief*. This is what makes him inseparable from modern science, even though many of his ideas about the universe and the application of mathematics were limited and of limited duration.

An example of Descartes's aesthetic attitude is to be found in a May 10, 1632, letter Descartes wrote to his friend Marin Mersenne (the enemy of Robert Fludd) desiring a new "celestial history be completed after Bacon's manner without any theory or hypothesis added." *Without any theory or hypothesis?* This was a denial of the tendency of the entire era! Was not science a record of divine revelation through nature? Was there not *meaning* to communicate?

No, said Descartes, there are only facts.

There is far more irony in Descartes's progress than would meet the eye of many historians of science, who tend to take certain developments for granted. In 1619, Descartes came up with an ironic title to a treatise, *The Mathematical Treasure Trove of Polybius, Citizen of the World*. This is the work that addresses "the distinguished brothers of the Rose Croix in Germany," claiming to have solved all difficulties in mathematics. Could it be, then, that Descartes had read Andreae's extraordinary satire, *Menippus*, published in 1617 and 1618, wherein a play (*Institutio magica pro Curiosis*) pits one "Curiosus" against the master "Christianus"?

After hearing Curiosus's powerful drive to become a magus, Christianus (an idealized Andreae) says that he wants Curiosus to give up his pipe dreams and vain evocations of elemental entities and get down to some serious, systematic hard work. He needs to invoke God. *This* is magic, he says: a refinement of the mind through a series of purifying encounters with reality. Curiosus is incredulous, astonished, disappointed.

Christianus then hits the nail on the head of Curiosus's problem: "I want you," says Christianus, "to be a citizen of the world, and not the foreign wanderer." This is a remarkable exchange.

Two years later, the man who hid from the world, Descartes, claimed suddenly to have become the “citizen of the world,” while Andreae continued to write about *Peregrinus*, or *Christian Cosmoxenus*, the foreign wanderer, the world-stranger. Both men were by nature “foreign wanderers,” aliens in the world. Naturally, both men desired to be citizens of the world. What was stopping them?

The world was corrupt. Just what kind of *res publica* did the world offer to be a citizen of?

Descartes went to Sweden in 1649 by invitation of the famous queen Kristina, who liked to get him up at 5 a.m. for philosophical lessons. Descartes was unpopular and unsupported in Sweden because he removed uncertainty—that is to say, biblical prophecy—from mathematics. Descartes’s abstraction was immediately perceived as cold comfort.

Like Sir Francis Bacon, Descartes died of cold, in 1650; he remained the foreign wanderer. In death, he has become a citizen of the world.

JOACHIM MORSIUS

It is fitting that we have taken our story of the Invisibles to the icy coasts of the Baltic. For there, in the coastal ports, with their roads inward to Saxony, Poland, and all trading points north, south, east, and west, there would develop a strange community of itinerants with curious and fruitful connections at the courts of Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and England.

A “community of itinerants” sums up the situation rather well, since the men concerned always seem to have been on the move, keeping in touch with one another through letter, book, and pamphlet. One can only wonder if Francis Bacon had such a body in mind when, in his *New Atlantis*, he referred to the “Merchants of Light” who departed their island both to acquire and to impart knowledge.

Joachim Morsius of Lübeck (1593–1643) is almost the archetypal wanderer. There is something romantic about a figure who follows his dream, motivated by the spur of his inner life against all considerations of bourgeois comfort. His example points toward the romanticism that would erupt throughout Germany a century and a half later, when thinking people had tired somewhat of the Age of Reason.

Born in Hamburg and educated at the University of Rostock, Morsius excelled in theology and early on headed for the esoteric aspect of religion. He took up alchemy. At the age of twenty-one, he was struck by the appearance of the Rosicrucian manifestos; they seemed to have arrived just in time. Morsius packed his bag and went in search of the Rosicrucians.

In 1619 he was in England, trying for recognition as an international scholar. The University of Cambridge granted him an M.A. Morsius continued to edit and publish theosophical and alchemical works. His *Theosophi eximii* (Exceptional Theosophy) was published that year in Frankfurt. The work defended the Rosicrucians and, in particular, their secrecy. Also in that year, Morsius met the British satirical playwright Ben Jonson, author of the comedy *The Alchemist,* which presented Paracelsian alchemists in London as ludicrous dupes.

Jonson listened hard and incorporated what he had learned from Morsius and elsewhere in his court masque for James I, Fortunate Isles and Their Union. Jonson mocked the Rosicrucian order as a "company of players." This was an acute judgment. In the previous year, Andreae had himself mocked the appearance of a new cast of "actors" playing new roles in the Rosicrucian furor. Andreae had designed the play; others were improvising the scripts.

By 1624, Morsius had a lively circle of contacts in Stockholm, Riga, and Amsterdam. These included Johannes Bureus (court antiquarian to the king of Sweden), Abraham von Franckenberg, Samuel Hartlib, and Johann Comensky (Comenius). According to Åkerman, Morsius and his friends represented "key ingredients in the transmission of Rosicrucian thought." Much of this thought was concerned with mystical prophecies of the coming of the Lion and the golden age.

This would be a Protestant golden age, filled with the wisdom of Hermetic philosophy, and Hartlib and Comenius traveled to England, seeing it as a suitable launching pad for the coming enlightenment, while keeping in close contact with northern Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. Many important British figures would be touched by this movement, among them poets and government servants Andrew Marvell and John Milton, the Hermetic philosopher and antiquarian Elias Ashmole, Sir Robert Moray, Thomas Vaughan, Robert Boyle, and William Backhouse—all moved in their own ways, nourished on an inward Rosicrucian dream.

Morsius had still not found the Rosicrucians, but he felt himself to be close to their work. He inquired of his friend Paracelsian alchemist and physician Balthasar Walter for guidance. Walter replied that the only man who truly understood the doctrines of the Rosicrucians was Jacob Böhme, the prosperous shoe dealer and mystic who had been forbidden by his parish priest from publishing his extraordinary theosophical and gnostic works after the scandalous appearance of his visionary work, *Aurora*, in 1612.

Böhme had seen a struggle among his contacts and friends over how to take the Rosicrucian message, and he decided that the manifestos were interesting, but mad. It would be best for Morsius to seek the true reformation in Christ through annihilation of the self that was bound to the lower world rather than a global reformation to be effected by doubtful means.

After Böhme's death in 1624, those who favored the thought-world of the Rosicrucians frequently held them in parity with the writings of Böhme, to the extent that the thoughts of the one were conflated with the other. Perhaps the man who initiated this important connection was Morsius's friend Abraham von Franckenberg, a disciple of Böhme and a keen and creative disseminator of Rosicrucian thought.

In July and August of 1624, Morsius was received in Stockholm as the guest of Johannes Bureus, author of the obscure and decidedly esoteric pro-Rosicrucian text FaMa e sCanzIa reDUX (Fame from out of Scandinavia Returned; 1616), which Bureus dispatched to universities and persons of note throughout Europe over many years (deciphered by Susanna Åkerman in her book Rose Cross over the Baltic). Bureus believed that Scandinavia had a vital apocalyptic role to play in the history of the Earth, believing that its runes preserved the lineaments of the ancient magical (Japhetic) language that had been lost in patriarchal times but miraculously preserved in the north, whence the Lion would come. Bureus appears to have wanted his king, Gustavus Adolphus, to take on the role of the redeeming and avenging Lion, but Adolphus was primarily motivated by political, not eschatological, judgments.

That did not stop Europe's Protestant prophets from making Gustavus Adolphus the new hope after the defeat of Frederick of the Palatinate at the Battle of the White Mountain on November 8, 1620. Frederick had been offered the crown of Bohemia by the Bohemian Protestant Church in

defiance of the Hapsburgs. Frederick was encouraged by prophecy and by Danish promises. He had better stayed at home among the soon-to-beplundered beauties of his palace at Heidelberg.

The court of the exiled Winter King and Queen of Bohemia at The Hague would nevertheless provide further encouragement for the scattered prophets of Rosicrucian reformation. The daughter of James I, the former queen Elizabeth, was a patron of Descartes and of other lights of scientific reform in England and elsewhere.

After Morsius's visit to Stockholm, Bureus felt encouraged to continue penning his complex prophetic works, writing in his diary of June 27, 1625, that he had received letters from the elector Augustus von Anhalt and from Joachim Morsius, along with two texts. One of these texts appears to have been a new edition of the Lion Prophecy, published by Morsius in Lübeck on March 25, 1625. It was signed with the name of the church of redemption of the sixth apocalyptic age: Philadelphia. Morsius also added his Hermetic name, Anastasius Philaretus Cosmopolita, thereby affirming that he too was a Citizen of the World—a conception that would, invisibly, gain in energy with the astonishing growth of Freemasonry a century later, when citizenry of the world gave birth to the enticing idea of a global republic of national families.

The main text of the prophecy had been published in 1619 as *De tinctura physicorum* (On the physical tincture), attributed to Paracelsus and timed, it would seem, to coincide with Frederick's doomed gambit in Bohemia, as well as being intended to encourage a Saxon-Danish alliance. Morsius's edition of the text begins with Paracelsus's claim that the grave will not hold him, for when the morning comes (note that the morning is when the brethren enter the vault of *frater C.R.* in the Fama), three great treasures will be found in Europe.

Morsius clearly felt himself very close to the treasure of Rosicrucian wisdom that in due course, according to the manifestos, would eventually break the hold of the papacy over the hearts and minds of Europe. Morsius asserted in the text that special hope could be obtained from reading Bureus's Rosicrucian text, the *FaMa . . . ,* wherein confirmation would be found for the rise of a metallic kingdom in the north, echoing the prophecies of Elias Artista in the works of Polish alchemist Michael Sendivogius.

In response to Morsius's gift, Bureus in July 1625 sent him the manuscript

of a new book tentatively entitled *Bucchina halil—e'xon one axonsatou—Araba odé vox turturis* (The trumpet blows out of the darkest night—he who has ears he may listen—a call from the deserts of Arabia by the voice of a turtledove). The work is a typically complex biblically inspired study of an angelic restitution of the world, from the inside, to culminate in either 1647 or 1674.

The book contains an unfinished table of the twelve precious stones on which the New Jerusalem will be built (Rev. 21:29). The precious stones appear to be associated with the names Manoel Chrysolaras (Immanuel Chrys), John Hus, Christian Rosenkreuz, Johannes Reuchlin, Martin Luther, Paracelsus, the seven Angels, Grace, and "Fr.Ros.Cr.," which may be a second reference to Rosenkreuz. The words corresponding to the stones calcedon, sapphire, and jasper appear to be *pneuma, psyche, soma* (spirit, mind, body).

Manoel Chysolaras was one of the first Greek scholars to work for the Medici in Florence, translating Platonic wisdom. His Greek grammar, *Erotemata* (Pertaining to desire), was published in the year he died, 1484—the same year given for Christian Rosenkreuz's death and burial. Åkerman thinks Bureus was playing on words, that is, "Manoel" invokes the idea of a Golden Immanuel: an alchemical principle (God with us) substituted for the second coming of Christ. As I stated earlier, this is alchemical, apocalyptic history *from the inside*.

Åkerman's understanding of Bureus's table is interesting: "Taken as a whole, the table signifies that in the Seventh Age, in a period of intense grace controlled by the seventh Angel, the Rosicrucian brotherhood will establish itself as a salvific assembly prepared to bring about a human restitution through the three principles: soul, mind and body."[5] The reforming body is then, by the redeeming character of grace (one of the two lights of the *Theophrastia sancta*), the mystical body of Christ, a body persisting through the indwelling of lights, or the Holy Spirit.

Deeply involved four years later, Morsius is reported to have met Johann Valentin Andreae in Calw, near Stuttgart, where Andreae was minister.[6] Perhaps the contact had come as a result of Andreae's extensive correspondence with the Czech educational genius Comenius, well known to Morsius.

One thing Comenius, Andreae, and Bureus did have in common was the spiritual nature of the redeeming community, a fraternity of knowledge that, if kept pure, and established on the rock of truth, would enjoy the profoundest angelic care. Science was not for knowledge alone or mere power over nature. Science was to establish mind over matter, and the highest levels of mind at that. Nature would appear naked only to the spiritualized mind; she was to be respected, not ravished.

Science was too important to be left to the ego-driven dementia of the unregenerate soul. It was vital that the brotherhood of regenerate truth hold the keys to knowledge for the benefit of humankind, in imitation of Christ, who rebuked the highest and served the lowest while yet remaining a king of kings and Lord of lords, gainsaid by none.

Anyhow, after the meeting with Andreae, Morsius does not appear to have given up his lifetime quest for Rosicrucian wisdom. One wonders how much of the "true story" passed Andreae's lips, or was it that their discussion centered on events in the Baltic and the role of Gustavus Adolphus in defending the Lutheran Church, of which Andreae was a priest? The encounter would make an intriguing scene in a movie about the first Rosicrucians.

Morsius was only fifty when he died in 1643. In the opinion of historian Frans Schick, commissioned by the S.S. to write a detailed, accurate study of the Rosicrucians, Morsius left a kind of template for the "Rosicrucian type" of the future: "seeking along secret paths to attain the higher knowledge of hidden worlds, to unveil the ultimate mysteries and from the very basis of things to bring forth a new era."[7]

ABRAHAM VON FR ANCKENBERG

Abraham von Franckenberg (1593–1652) was a mystic based in Danzig who had embraced and would eventually write a biography of his spiritual master, Jacob Böhme (*De Vita et scriptis Jacobi Bohmii;* Gichtel, Amsterdam, 1682). Franckenberg was doubtless struck by the coincidence that the *Fama* promised an Aurora, "a divine light in the sky" that would precede the last age, and the fact that Böhme's first book was likewise called *Aurora* (1612) and revealed the immanence of the heavenly worlds to the one who had been

taken up into God's full grace and acquired Adamic levels of perception.

Franckenberg was a theosophist, which, in this context, means someone who has attempted to penetrate in conscious understanding the divine workings within the world and the human being in a systematic or scientific way. The marvelous illustrations of the time in theosophic books therefore show what the eye cannot see: the beams, radiations, and signs of divine presence and transformative power in the world. In modern parlance, they are rather trippy, revealing concretely what has been suggested to the mind by an indwelling light, now thoroughly turned on.

Franckenberg brought this light to everything he did, and he served as a kind of clearinghouse of ideas for a wide circle, including Johannes Bureus (who sent him his comments on his *FaMa* . . . in 1646), Samuel Hartlib (the German-speaking Polish merchant and social reformer who received this material from Bureus via Franckenberg), Comenius (the educational reformer), Comenius's fellow pansophist educationalist Cyprian Kinner at Elbing, and the advanced astronomer Johan Hevelius, also based at Danzig. And, of course, there was Joachim Morsius.

These associations seem to have made up the kernel of what would in years to come be seen as an "invisible college," a band of brothers in all but name, keenly working to establish the light of heavenly blessing upon a divided and ignorant world. In 1639, Franckenberg used an earlier version of Bureus's *FaMa e SCanzIa reDUX* to compose his perceptive text *Theophrastia Valentiniana*, a Gnostic-Paracelsian work first published in 1700 in Pietist Gottfried Arnold's *Impartial History of Heretics and Churches*. Franckenberg's work inspired Arnold to link up the Gnostic Valentinus, the *Theophrastia sancta* (Paracelsus), the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, Jacob Böhme, and Giordano Bruno in a novel and highly suggestive transmission narrative of the light of *gnosis* manifested in time.

In 1644, Franckenberg showed his intellectual brilliance in a study of Giordano Bruno's infinite universe and worlds. It was called *Oculus sidereus*, published in Danzig. Franckenberg defended Bruno's scary universe, an unbounded, uncentered universe unfolding uniformly and infinitely in all directions. Infinity, for Bruno, corresponded in time and space to what eternity was "beyond" it. An eternal God had to create an infinite universe; God's potential cannot be exhausted. People were going to have to open their

minds considerably. The universe was God in a state of expression, a view close to pantheism but not identical with it (panentheism might be closer). Bruno's universe remained to be seen.

Franckenberg dedicated a copy of *Oculus sidereus* (The starry eye) to Bureus, calling him a *theo-sophorum lumini.* The concept of illumination and —for those illuminated—the "illuminati" was a feature of the circle, and has come down to us in many different ways, some grossly misleading. When Comenius dedicated his *Via lucis* (Way of light) to the Royal Society in 1668, he addressed them as "illuminati," a designation doubtless offered in hope that nonetheless may have made some of the more prosaic members of that novel body feel uncomfortable.

Franckenberg explained in his *Oculus siderus* that Bruno's doctrine of the infinite universe was originally a Hermetic-Pythagorean doctrine that also appeared in Psalm 104:1–5, wherein Franckenberg perceived the idea of an original creation from a chaotic mass suddenly vivified by the light of nature, derived from a primal spark in the being of God. Thus, Franckenberg's study of Bruno resonated with his appreciation for Böhme, who also taught a doctrine that begins with such a spark (the so-called double fall doctrine; see my book *Gnostic Philosophy*, Inner Traditions, 2005).

Abraham von Franckenberg's text was exceptionally well informed. He was very familiar with the main cosmological and cosmosophical ideas of the time and could handle the kabbalistic aspects of the study with fluency. He was working toward a new cosmology, something that he believed the *Fama* had announced as a blessing issuing from the invisible brotherhood's secret work.

If you were prepared to work with the brotherhood secretly (that is, in your heart) and spiritually, then the blessings of the Father of Lights would be showered like dew upon your work. God was revealing himself, expressing (for those who could read the signs) the meaning and mystery of his creation. Thus, Franckenberg took a serious interest in the nature of space. What was it? Was it, as Descartes supposed, basically a liquid substance, something in which vortices could be formed by the movements of planets?

Franckenberg found suggestions in the scientific views of the time that coincided with the revealed Word of the Bible. The Bible spoke of God's spirit moving "upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2); it spoke of the "beams

of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. 104:3–4).

Franckenberg speculated on the "fiery water," the Aesch-Maschim of the kabbalists, concluding that this paradoxical "fiery water" or "watery fire" spoken of by alchemists was the nature of space described in the Psalm where God covers himself "with light as with a garment." Böhme had taught that fire and light were one. God's self-manifestation requires the manifestation of the opposites fire and light, where fire is stern and light is love. The opposites generate a spark by friction. The universe is derived from metaphysical combustion, so to speak.

It is interesting that the idea of the Aesch-Maschim would become important in Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen's Order of Asiatic Brethren (founded in 1780 or 1781). In that order, the Masonic Star that appears at lodge meetings, which usually stands for God's presence, was represented as standing for the Aesch-Maschim, "the watery fire or fiery water, which we know how to obtain from our substance."[8]

One hundred and thirty-five years earlier, Franckenberg had, through his inquiry into the nature of space, celestial fire, and the universe, spurred the development of a new cosmology.

COMENIUS AND HARTLIB

It was the power of new learning, new *axiomata*, a new foundation, and a new cosmology that united the work of Samuel Hartlib (1595–1662) and Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670).

Comenius is a particularly interesting light within the pantheon of Rosicrucian heroes. While Rosicrucianism would go on as the central or additional component of a large number of esoteric societies and movements, Comenius's reading of the first Rosicrucian challenge generated major institutions of a completely exoteric character.

Comenius's was the mind essential to the development of the Royal Society (the world's first properly established national scientific organization) and the United Nations global educational organization called UNESCO. As if this were not enough, Comenius also had a large role in

establishing the idea of universal education from infancy. It is hard to believe that so much worldly benefit could come from one man, a man absolutely driven by profound—and invisible—spiritual impulses.

He was born on March 28, 1592, at Uhersky Brod (Hungarian Ford) in Moravia to a family of the Jednota Bratska, the Unity of Brethren or Moravian Brothers, descendants of the first reformed church in the world. Jan Amos Comensky studied at Herborn in Hessen, then at Heidelberg, where we last met him witnessing the return of the elector Frederick of the Palatinate and his English wife, the princess Elizabeth, in the summer of 1613. By this time, Comenius had already seen and been fired by the manuscript version of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. We know that the *Fama* had reached Prague by 1612 because a person calling himself I.B. responded to it from that place.

In 1614, Comenius returned to Moravia, was ordained a pastor, married, and witnessed the beginning of the furor that followed the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis* and its announcement of a reformation of the whole wide world.

In his semiautobiographical masterpiece *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* (1622/23), Comenius described the excitement of those days and parodies the titles of a number of the first responses to the *Fama* that were clearly taken as examples of Rosicrucian learning. One of the titles is based on Fludd's *History of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm*. It is strange that Comenius should have parodied the title of that work, since in fact Comenius's subsequent writings would embrace the pansophic enterprise, evident in Fludd's work, to a great degree. Comenius was, however, disappointed by the works that followed the *Fama*. If there was a body of *genii* behind the brotherhood's declarations, they were certainly keeping quiet about what they really had to offer. This was his conclusion. However, it was a conclusion written after further virtually intolerable burdens of personal pain and disappointment.

He had hoped for so much in those heady days between 1614 and the coronation of Frederick and Elizabeth as king and queen of Bohemia on November 4, 1619. Those hopes would be smashed to pieces one year later when the forces of the Bohemian army and those of Christian of Anhalt were routed at the Battle of the White Mountain, outside Prague, by Tully, commander of the Catholic League forces of the new, Jesuit-educated

emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Ferdinand II.

Frederick and Elizabeth f led amid a welter of savage Catholic propaganda that did not stop short of bellowing that the Winter King and Queen of Bohemia had become prey to the insanities of Rosicrucian witches.

At a stroke, the victory of the Catholic forces robbed the Czech people of nationhood, self-government, and the free practice of their religion. In 1624, it would be forbidden for pastors of the Bohemian Church to minister in their own lands. It is no surprise that a century later, it would be John Wesley's encounter with Moravian Brethren in America (self-exiled from an intolerant continent) that would so warm Wesley's heart and change his outlook on religion. The Moravian Brethren would become a mobile and scattered body. Trying to minister to them would be just one of the challenges of Comenius's life.

That life was about to suffer further terrible blows. As a result of the rampaging, avenging forces that came down from Austria upon the fold of Bohemia, Comenius's house and library at Fulnek were burned to the ground, while his first wife and their two children died from plague, exacerbated by deprivation. The Thirty Years' War had begun.

Comenius fled with forty other pastors—at one time living in a cave—until they found secret refuge on the lands of Count Zerotin at Brandeis on the Adler (Eagle) River. All but broken, Comenius wrote an account of the whirlpool into which his life had been sucked, *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart.*

The Rosicrucian promise having failed to live up to itself ("Pilgrim Beholds the Rosicrucians"), the world turned topsy-turvy where words now meant their opposite—a judge of justice was now a thief, a minister of truth was a perverted liar, those set to care for the people were their despoilers—Comenius's antihero, called Pilgrim, despairs. A voice says, "Return! Return from whence thou camest. Return to the House of the Heart, and then close the doors behind thee!"

And then a gnostic window through the miseries and darkness of the world is opened to him; Pilgrim sees beneath the skin of the apparent world and is vouchsafed a fiery vision of angelic care and guidance that goes straight to his heart. A light begins to shine in him that will never be put out. Comenius's pilgrim begins to make spiritual progress. Comenius's real life

had begun.

A classic of Czech literature, *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* has a secret up its sleeve. Comenius's masterpiece repeats whole passages from Johann Valentin Andreae's *Peregrini in patria errores* (Travels abroad in the land of errors; "Utopiae," Zetzner, Strasbourg, 1618). Comenius was profoundly moved, his ideas changed and enriched, by his encounter with the works of Andreae, written after the publication of the *Fama*. By understanding Andreae's real mind, Comenius was thus able to understand the deeper meaning of the *Fama* and find a way of putting its dynamic message into practice.

By some strange providence, Andreae had found his heir, and Comenius, having been handed the torch, could spread the word around Europe, to those who would listen, of the greatness of Andreae's practical works of Christian spirituality. He did this most by putting them into practice.

Andreae and Comenius began corresponding in 1628, the year in which Samuel Hartlib, the German-speaking Pole from Elbing in Polish Prussia, left Germany to launch *his* pansophic enterprise in England. Comenius, meanwhile, motivated by the pressures to see the children of the Unity of Brethren properly educated, had begun his works of pansophic education, and had produced brilliant, accessible educational handbooks that were in massive demand.

Pansophy means "all-knowledge." Pansophic works were essentially pictorial encyclopaedias that linked all phenomena to a total system of knowledge that was itself traced to divine principles. Thus, for example, in Comenius's work *Pansophiae templum ad ipsus supreme architecti, Omnipotentis Dei ideas, normas legisque extruendum* (A temple of all wisdom to the supreme architect himself, the Almighty God of the ideal, extruding from the rules and laws), Comenius divided pansophy into seven parts, so that the mind could pass through seven stages from the knowledge of nature to the contemplation of the supreme God, above and behind all natural appearances, or manifestations of God's being.

Shortly before Hartlib left for England, Comenius met him at Elbing, where Comenius had come to form a community of exiled brethren. He was introduced to the Scots pansophist John Dury, who would accompany Hartlib to England. It was apparently Dury's judgment that England was the most

suitable place to get the great reforms under way. The project was backed by the British ambassador to the court of Frederick and Elizabeth at The Hague in Holland. Boswell happened to be Francis Bacon's literary executor (Bacon had died two years previously). Boswell knew all about Bacon's ideal Grand Instauration and recognized Hartlib as a man in tune with Bacon's ideals.

The project was simple enough in conception: Save Europe from itself and inaugurate the golden age through conformity to God's wisdom. What could be easier? It would seem that the questionable modesty of the enterprise was overcome by the deep apocalyptic mood of expectation engendered by the spiritual material on which Hartlib and his friends had been inwardly feeding.

In spite of the ways of the world, Hartlib made great progress in England in the early years of the reign of Charles I. Moving to London, Hartlib quickly became involved with Britain's leading intellectuals and politically active figures, operating a kind of permanent think tank, looking out for new talent.

As Hartlib came to grips with his mission, he began to recognize more and more the virtue of technological development as a means for improving people's lot and enlightening them as to the powers of the mind. Hartlib produced many mechanical patents, encouraged agricultural developments, practiced alchemy for medicinal use; he invented calculators, double-writing and drawing instruments, seed machines and siege engines. An interest in fortifications had long bound the ingenuity of technologists, architects, and physicists. While Hartlib was in London, for example, King's Master Mason and master of the London Masons' Company (1633) Nicholas Stone (1586–1647) was working on Windsor Castle, while his colleague Inigo Jones was pushing for architectural design to be recognized as a liberal art. Stone's classically educated son, Nicholas, would write the *Enchiridion of Fortification(*1645).

Since Hartlib saw his task as the recording of all human knowledge to make it universally available for the education of all humankind, it would be surprising if, in the course of his multifarious activities, Hartlib did not make some contact with members of the London Masons' Company.

Comenius, meanwhile, based at Lissa on the Silesian border until 1641, was going from strength to strength. Described as a "teacher of the nations," Comenius invented the children's picture book and produced an astoundingly

successful teaching manual for learning languages that was itself translated for use around the world. Keeping in touch with the light of Andreae's guidance, Comenius deepened his educational theories. The problem of the world was ignorance. Once ignorance and the moral degeneration that was its fruit were ameliorated by education, the way would be open for world peace, the harmony of the world that God so desired for his children.

God wants people to know him, asserted Comenius through all his works. Everything that lives speaks to the enlightened soul of the divine. Therefore, true education must be bonded to spiritual and moral development. As the knowledge deepened and the soul rose, the love of God would become an experiential reality.

There were three aspects of human life, according to Comenius: material, rational, and spiritual. Education that failed to take in the claims of all three aspects of the human being would be partial and ultimately stunted. Comenius believed in the transformation of human beings through raising them to their source.

What was even more amazing than his theory, the truth of which has been demonstrated the world over, was that Comenius truly believed that learning should be fun. He thought it should be made as easy as possible by visual aids and thus revolutionized the whole concept and practice of education in Europe. He virtually invented the modern curriculum, with practical subjects and times for play. He introduced geography and art to the sphere of education. He believed that the process should begin at infancy—and go on for life. Ultimately, the educated person would continue to self-educate, bringing his or her children into the process. Comenius went beyond Bacon and the development of the scientific mind, toward the perfectibility of the individual.

Comenius was truly enlightening, and it is a delight to learn that many called on his services. Cardinal Richelieu tried to get him to run France's education system. The Swedes ate from his hand where education was concerned. Hungary and Holland begged him to reform their education systems. The president of Harvard University invited him to perform similar services in the American colonies. Publishers seized the opportunity for new picture manuals, so popular with children and parents alike. Fifteen thousand Londoners signed a petition for Comenius to come to England to reform the

educational system—a reform prevented, in any event, by the outbreak of civil war in 1642.

Comenius saw his educational vocation in the widest possible light, always mindful of the idea in the *Fama* of a college of dedicated men, sharing their knowledge and experience. In his *Panegersia*, Comenius tried to forge a universal alliance of people of goodwill, a *Collegium Lucis ad fundandam Ecclesiam vere Catholicam Philadephiam* (To the College of Light to the true fundamental universal Church of Philadelphia [brotherly love]). He recognized that the *Fama*'s vision had been the preludium to this grand conception.

The conception was shared by Hartlib, who had been a member of the Baltic Antilia movement before leaving for England. Antilia was a Christian Society, based on Andreae's ideas (he had founded a Christian Society in 1620), led by Heinrich Heim of Dorpat, a friend of Andreae. These experiences would deepen into a firmer conception of a goodly, godly scientific fraternity.

In 1640, Hartlib addressed his description of the famous Kingdome of Macaria to the newly installed Long Parliament, from whom so much was expected by way of English reformation—or reforming the Reformation. He compared his ideal country to More's Utopia and to Bacon's Bensalem, not because he thought he could reproduce them, but because he knew these ideas were attractive pictorial representations of what was possible in principle—the "city on the hill," as it were. Nothing could be achieved without an ideal.

In a telling phrase, Hartlib hoped the parliament, inspired by God's will, would "lay the corner Stone of the world's happiness before the final recesse thereof. " Again, we hear the apocalyptic bell ringing. There was not much time! Precisely how much, who could say? People of goodwill would not want to be caught napping should Elias—or Christ himself—appear in the tumult.

A year later, in 1641, Hartlib felt the time had come to invite the great Comenius to England. The two men had been actively corresponding since 1632. In 1634, Hartlib had started fund-raising for the purpose of publishing Comenius's pansophic works in England. According to British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, Comenius, Hartlib, and Dury were the "only

philosophers" of the English revolution dreamed of from the Long Parliament to the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.[9]

The work was not entirely wasted. In 1641, Comenius was inspired sufficiently by his visit to England to write the *Via lucis* (Way of Light), outlining a college that would educate and guide society toward universal salvation: a Christian academy for pansophy to lead to a holy unity of all nations. England had a divine destiny. This idea would penetrate the soul of poet Milton and go on to regenerate the heart of William Blake over a century and a half later.

The idea also attracted the ruling party in parliament—unfortunately, this was just before the outbreak of civil war. What a blow this must have been for Comenius! Great things, great possibilities, once more blasted by people's ignorance of one another, their animal-like need to kill to prove themselves in the right.

Comenius's *Way of Light* did not come to light until it was published in Amsterdam in 1668, dedicated to the Royal Society. The Royal Society took much from the educational ideas of Hartlib and Comenius—and, indirectly, from Andreae. Technicians were a vital part of the society's interest.

However, the nature of the times and all that had passed in the previous twenty years necessarily limited the society's scope to "the improving of Natural Knowledge by experiments"—a laudable aim, no doubt, but Comenius warned his readers that should knowledge of mind over matter be employed solely for itself, they would be building a Babel turned upside down, heading not toward heaven, but to hell. Kindly spirits have seen the prophetic quality of that warning. Technology has become, not only in the minds of fine philosophers such as Hans Jonas but also in the nightmares of the general public—in the West, at least—a scourge wielded by the greedy on the backs of the defenseless.

It was not only a matter of providing ideas; the actual foundation of the society may be attributed to the inspiration of its members from a preexisting body that went loosely by the name of the Invisible College. This was doubtless something of a pleasant joke among those who recognied its ironic link with the House of the Holy Spirit in the *Fama*, but it was also a serious idea. The Invisible College did not yet have a home. Before it did so, it existed chiefly in the minds of those called to participate in the venture.

One of those people was Robert Boyle, a deeply evangelical Christian who in a famous letter of 1647 spoke to his former tutor about a group of people who "take the whole body of mankind to their care."[10] He calls them "the cornerstones." These "cornerstones" included Hartlib, Dr. John Wilkins (chaplain to the prince elector Palatine in London in 1645), and Theodore Haak, a German from the Palatinate, encouraged by Elizabeth of Bohemia in The Hague. From 1648 to 1659, John Wilkins's rooms at Wadham College, Oxford—filled with "many artificial, mathematical and magical curiosities," according to visitor John Evelyn—was the setting for the visits of clever mechanicians and mathematicians such as Christopher Wren and William Petty.

The technological promise of Andreae's *Fama* was well represented. Had Comenius stayed in England, there might have been more of an educational twist to the work, but Comenius left England when the civil war got under way in 1642. He had seen it all before.

In July of that year, Comenius had a historic encounter with René Descartes at Endegeest Castle, near Leiden in Holland. The meeting was cordial, but they were really on opposite sides of the scientific fence. Descartes had philosophized himself into a position where he saw the human mind as a detached observing mechanism whose only essential life was thought. Comenius saw the human being as part of God's creation, a part of nature, intimately webbed with all living things.

Furthermore, Andreae was convinced that human knowledge obtained solely through the senses (Bacon) and rational thought (Descartes) was imperfect and incomplete. He believed their concept of the mind was too limited and, if followed, would generate an imprisoning rather than a truly liberating technology. So much of his time, Comenius was ahead of it. He would have to travel far to find one like himself.

In a letter of September 16, 1629, Andreae suggested to Comenius that he pick up the torch; he did. This commission was in reply to a question, put to Andreae by Comenius in a letter of the previous year, asking what "holy ambition" lay behind his works. Andreae sent Comenius his *Christianae societatis imago* (An image of a Christian society; 1620), with its title-page rubric from Matthew 18: "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there shall I be."

It only takes two or three.

It only takes two or three to build an image of a truly Christian society. This had been Andreae's aim, he told Comenius. Personal misfortunes—such as the wreck of his house, library, mechanical instruments, and art collection when the Bavarian army looted his hometown—had foiled Andreae's best efforts to reform the Reformation. The task was now as much Comenius's as it would remain his.

What a tribute to the Czech Comenius! What a perspicacious judgment of the Swabian Andreae to recognize the value of a man!

And so we must turn our attention back to the torchbearer, who, having inadvertently initiated the whole furor, had a mind to use it.

And who knew the *Fama* better than he?

ELEVEN

ANDREAE COSMOXENUS

If you deliver yourself to an inquest, the costs will be yours; if you seek to predict, you deceive yourself; if you conceive of suspicions, you lose the sense; if you reproach me, you calumniate me.

JOHANN VALENTIN ANDREAE

In April 1614, one month after the first publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, Johann Valentin Andreae got married. His bride was the niece of Bishop Erasmus Grüninger. Settled into a Lutheran ministry at Vaihingen, near Stuttgart, Andreae was now firmly placed in Württemberg's ecclesiastical establishment.

Andreae had been twenty-three when he wrote the *Fama*; he was now getting on for twenty-eight. At twenty-three a young man feels he may get away with a good deal of cheek and not a few errors and mishaps, especially if he is a clever and attractive personality. As he nears thirty, the young man becomes aware that the consequences of his actions may not be so easily overturned. He has to learn to watch his step. And that step could never be quite so light again; Andreae was very soon shouldered with new responsibilities.

Andreae was always, in the marrow of his soul, whether he liked it or not, a "Cosmoxenus," that is, a world-stranger. He wanders in the world like the holy fool, blowing in the wind, sensitive to the spirit and aware that his homeland is elsewhere. He is a kind of troubadour in the image of Harpocrates, the divine sun-child whose wisdom necessitates secrecy. His

habitual stance is a smile with a finger to his lips. He is something of an outsider in the world, a kind of spy on the activities of its inhabitants. He has vision, but those who do not know him, or love him, will be as suspicious as villagers can be when a stranger is seen. He is in the world, but his own will not receive him. He is different, and he knows it.

But Andreae's children—they would have to be citizens of the world. No decent father condemns his children to his own existential predicament. Andreae chose as godfathers to his three children Christoph Besold, holder of the chair of jurisprudence at Tübingen; his Austrian friend Abraham Hölzl; and the nobleman of Lüneburg, Wilhelm von der Wense, a man who shared Andreae's passion for mechanics and a visitor to imprisoned visionary Tommaso Campanella, author of the Hermeticutopian *City of the Sun*, Andreae's natural home.

It is therefore most interesting that the first book Andreae published (unusually) under his own name, in the wake of the *Fama*'s first printing, had precisely zero interest in spiritual, political, or apocalyptic speculation. There was no fantasy, no fanfare of Fame's dubious melody.

To those who considered the works that provided literary foam in the *Fama*'s stirring wake to be Rosicrucian works, there was nothing Rosicrucian here at all: no magic (as they understood it) nor mystery.

From the point of view of its creator, however, the *Collectaneorum mathematicorum decades XI. centum et decem tabulis Aeneis exhibitae* (A book of ten on mathematical collections. XI. One hundred and ten exhibits of the record of Aeneas; Tübingen, Johann Alexander Cellius, 1614) would be the kind of thing that *would* come from *frater C.R.*'s House of the Holy Spirit, if that body had indeed been interested in publishing educational books. Anyone who really understood what the *Fama* was getting at would see that.

Naturally, the work has not loomed large in nearly four hundred years of commentary on the Rosicrucian Brotherhood.

And yet the contents of the book are extremely telling as to Andreae's fundamental priorities and outlook. The book, also called *Memoriale mathematicum* (A monument to mathematics; republished in Strasbourg in 1619 as *Memorialia, benevolentium*), consists of 110 copper plates that indicate the scope and usefulness of mathematical wisdom. Thus it

anticipates the later pictorial productions of Comenius and foreshadows his spiritual priorities.

A Latin epigram around the title of the 1614 Tübingen edition translates as: “We live in Christ, the rest wander in death.” The verb *erunt* also looks forward to the *patria errores* (the land of errors) into which Andreae’s antihero Peregrinus (the foreign wanderer) will stray in 1618.

Andreae’s thinking seems to have been inspired by a famous painting of Pieter Brueghel the Elder, *The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind.* Andreae was convinced that setting right the vision of his times required an inward awakening of the mind of Christ: “The truth will set you free.”

For anyone who cared to notice, at the top of the design for the title page were the words *Jhesus mihi omnia* (Jesus, everything to me), the same words that appeared on the brass plate in the tomb of *frater C.R.* in the *Fama*.

The book derived from discussions held among members of Andreae’s little Mathematical Institute (or College), formulated on paper in 1613 and consisting of Christoph and Johann Georg Besold, Johann Offenburg, Abraham Hölzl, Wilhelm von der Wense, Sylvester Brunschweig, Johann Winter, Peter Falk, Christoph Georg, and the Swedish brothers Åke and Thure Axel from Göxholm.

The Axel brothers had been sent to Germany by Sweden’s chief minister, Axel Oxenstierna, under the supervision of Peter Falk, a fortifications expert. At Tübingen, the brothers were required to give orations on the relations between church and state, chaired by Christoph Besold. Since the two brothers had grown up in the household of Oxenstierna, it was thought likely that they would take up major diplomatic roles for the new king, Gustavus Adolphus. This tells us something about the scope of Andreae’s vision that a mere list of names cannot.

As an example of plain, unvarnished truth, Andreae’s mathematical collection offers a pristine presentation of honest facts.

Mathematics, fortification, architecture, navigation, mechanics, and agriculture are the subjects under discussion. The authorities in each field are included by way of summaries of their views. The book contains the axioms of Euclidean geometry, arithmetic (including cossic equations), the laws of optics, elementary geometrical design principles, and construction rules for

basic geometrical figures in two and three dimensions, as well as an open account of the theories of geo-heliocentric and heliocentric systems, with reference to Copernicus, Röslin, Tycho Brahe, and Reymaurus Ursus.

The subject moves on to architecture, where the reader is provided with a variety of architectural methods. A vaulted passage is illustrated, along with a double colonnaded archway, a flight of stairs, and a monastery layout based on that in Nuremberg. Another ground plan shows Tycho Brahe's Uraniborg observatory. The elements of mechanics are illustrated, as well as clock design, cartography, and the manner by which geometry may be applied to fortifications and defensive towers. Albrecht Dürer's work on perspective in art is also included (Andreae had several original works by Dürer, destroyed by invading troops during the Thirty Years' War).

In this company it is somewhat striking that Johann Valentin Andreae is usually referred to as a theologian. If, as the medieval mind believed, theology was queen of the sciences, then Andreae had not strayed so far from ancient traditions as might first be thought!

Beneath the benevolent gaze of the Queen of Truth, readers could see for themselves the harmonious Vitruvian theories of architecture, as well as the Pythagorean abacus, an astrolabium (belonging to Andreae), and another possession of his, the Dukal Rotae, a memory wheel for predicting planetary positions in each month.

Andreae showed his excellent grasp of the challenges of technical drawing with his construction of a helix—no easy task today or any day. (I possess a humble O-Level qualification in engineering drawing and know how difficult it is!)

Andreae illustrates the profound respect for, and society's need of, artisans and craftspeople. Was this elevation of the trades influential in the development of Accepted Freemasonry in England? Could the mode of transition be the common interest in fortification, mechanics, mathematics, and architecture, shared by such men as the Stones (father and sons), Sir Robert Moray, Elias Ashmole, Robert Fludd, and the late John Dee, among others?

It is a noble (but unproven) speculation that behind the Rosicrucian phenomenon and the development of symbolic Freemasonry might stand the same figure, a true citizen of the world and world-stranger, though not alone,

of course.

Two little facts pertaining to Andreae's mathematics book might tease those who have suspected some link between Andreae and Masonic developments in Britain. First, the work contains an illustration by Andreae of a twelve-pointed fortress. The same illustration appears in Robert Fludd's *Macrocosmic History of Mechanics* (Frankfurt, 1618), where it is described as "an ideal fortification invented by a German."

Second, Andreae's drawing skills were not only exhibited in the mathematics book. They were also to be found in his edition of his friend Matthias Hafenreffer's *Templum Ezechielis* (The Temple of Ezekiel; Tübingen, 1611). Hafenreffer was especially thanked in the *Collectaneorum*'s section on astronomy (Hafenreffer had given Andreae his doctorate in theology in 1614).

Andreae's drawing of the temple's tabernacle was itself taken from Pradi and Villalpando's treatise on the visions of Ezekiel (Rome, 1595; second volume, 1605), designed to match ground plan designs for the king of Spain's new palace, the Escorial. The Escorial exhibited practical and symbolic Freemasonry synthesized in the manner and scale of its proportions, pleasing to God and deserving of angelic care. If the proportions are divinely exact, the whole energy of the universe will support the structure. This principle may explain why much modern architecture makes sensitive people feel strangely insecure.

The last image of Andreae's book illustrates the Latin epigram that begins it: an insoluble labyrinth, entitled *Vita nostra error* (Life, our country of wandering)—a now familiar theme of Andreae's work. He who locates all his interest in the world without the spiritual guidance of Christ will find a never-ending maze—the nature of which must be to ensure that the wanderer within it becomes hopelessly lost. This maze is a representation of worldly knowledge cut off from spiritual knowledge and evokes Comenius's later warning to the members of the Royal Society in 1668: mere mastery over nature alone will entail a crippling and ruinous dependency upon nature, with no way of escape. That is to say: hell. And hell is, as Andreae will show in his *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz*, being stuck in a place where one can just glimpse a higher way of escape, but is utterly deprived of the means to reach it. There is a light in nature, but one also needs the light of

grace as well. This was the *Theophrastia sancta*, whose essential message Andreae comprehended.

Andreae's work on mathematics would also be reflected in his classic of Christian utopianism, known as *Christianopolis*, published four years later. The ideal Christian city of knowledge is constructed on rigorous mathematical lines, a language the angels share, for its harmonies speak of a higher, perfect power. Whether the angels shared an interest in fortifications, I cannot say, but what call for a city if not as a means of protection?

Wilhelm von der Wense had a great interest in mechanics and fortifications —an ideal choice for a godfather—and he encouraged Andreae to promote his fusion of mathematics and spirituality (*Christianopolis*) among Nuremberg merchants. Had he done so in England after 1638—the first recorded date for an "Accepcon" (Acception) within the London Masons' Company headquarters—Andreae would doubtless have found himself invited into the fellowship of "accepted" Free Masons in that city. I rather suspect Andreae would have appreciated such an invitation; he was clearly fond of fraternities, places where he could be himself in fellowship with others.

Sadly, perhaps, Andreae never came to Britain, but some of his books, and at least one important correspondent, did.

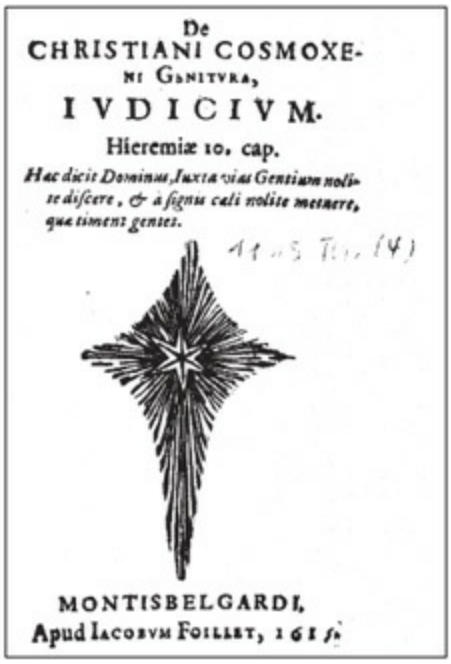
DE CHRISTIANI COSMOXENI GENITURA IUDICIUM

The publication of *De Christiani Cosmoxeni genitura iudicium* (Montbéliard, Jacques Foillet, 1615) in the year the Confessio Fraternitatis appeared represents one of a number of Andreae's corrective responses to the Rosicrucian furor. Instead of *frater C.R.*, we are now presented with Christian World-Stranger. Is this an exploration of another side to Father C.R.C.'s protean character?

The title means a judgment or observation on the horoscope of Christian Cosmoxenus (world-stranger). Thus it is also a judgment of popular astrology and the whole idea of human life being determined by the stars. Andreae clearly valued his work on this book; more than thirty passages from it (numbers 704–35) would appear in the *Theca gladii spiritus*, published in the

following year, attributed to Tobias Hess. The invisible presence of Tobias Hess looms large in the ideal figure of Christian Cosmoxenus. Dominant ideas from the work would also appear in the second part of Andreae's *Invitation to the Fraternity of Christ* (1618). These ideas seem to have been drawn in part from observation of Hess's own character and conduct.

Those who would emulate Christian Cosmoxenus were instructed to observe the necessity of trial and of penitence until they became docile in God's hands, no longer reliant on the stars and the calculations of the ages of history. This was a direct attack on Naometrianism and the astro-calendar makers who had seen the *Fama* as talking their language. Those who followed the path of penitence and were courageous enough to face the trial might permit themselves to be invaded by the light of divine grace. All Christians who lived out their faith thus constituted a unity, a true fraternity bonded in the same work, which had nothing extreme or immoderate about it.


De
CHRISTIANI COSMOXE-
NI GENITVRA,
IVDICIVM.
Hieremiæ 10. cap.
Hæc dicit Dominus, Juxta vias Gentium noli-
te discere, & a signis cæli nolite metuere,
quæ timent gentes.
MONTISBELGARDI,
Apud Iacobvm Foillet, 1619.

Johann Valentin Andreae, *De Christiani Cosmoxeni genitura iudicium;* Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1619. (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Christian Cosmoxenus is a "Renatus," one reborn, regenerated from within; he belongs to the Fraternity of the Friends of God.

Christian Cosmoxenus has contracted a triple marriage: first, of the soul with the body; then of a sound (sane) body with the holy life; finally of the

soul betrothed to Christ. These nuptials are perpetual, not a possession; they constitute a repeated hierogamy (higher marriage). The fruit of this triple nuptial process is the blessing of extraordinary graces. Christian Cosmoxenus has the angels to serve him; Nature in her entirety is his slave through philosophy, the sciences, and technology. Thus, he becomes the architect of the true City of Man, and the priest of a temple whose saint of saints is the soul offered to his divine spouse.

Andreae asserted that this Christian existed nowhere in the world.

Christian Cosmoxenus was the image of the ideal Christian. Roland Edighoffer has observed that he was more perfect even than the Christian Rosenkreuz of *The Chemical Wedding* (published in the following year), since in that story Christian Rosenkreuz's sins keep him as a watchman at the doors of the Kingdom.

Carlos Gilly's treatment of Christian Cosmoxenus is less theological and more biographical. He sees the figure as being directly inspired by the figure of Tobias Hess, to the point of actual identification. As Andreae would reveal in his *Tobiae Hessi viri incomparabilis immortalitas* (1619), the unique Hess was a great theologian, a servant of Christ, a doctor of truth, an author of the good, an extremely talented inventor, a formidable mechanic, a genius of literature, a star of Tübingen, and a manipulator of the treasures of nature. Thus, Hess embodies the perfect image that is both truly present in the world but not of this world. He is like a stranger or foreign guest who wanders as a pilgrim through the world without caring about the might of the stars. He is like the first Adam returned to gaze on his progeny.

It seems to have been Hess's point of view that the only astrology for which Cosmoxenus/Hess had any sympathy was that which recognized the Word (the Logos of God) at its center, and the *signa temporum* (signs of the times) announced in the Bible as a sign. Jesus said it was a wicked generation that sought for signs yet remained blind to the signs all about them.

Stellar signs beyond this caveat, whether favorable or unfavorable, have no power to predict good or ill whatsoever. God and Nature indicated the future, not the firmament. This doctrine shows some acquaintance with a fascinating, profound work by "heretic" Valentin Weigel (1533–1588), whose *Astrology Theologised* appeared after his death. Its rubric *Sapiens dominabitur astris* (the wise man rules his stars) set up its theme that "neither God nor the

Macrocosm do compel or force man . . . from without, to this or that good or evil kind of life, by a certain natural necessity." Put another way, we should not accept doctrines of fatalism based on stellar movements. The stars were, as it were, made for humankind, not humankind for the stars. We can use their powers for good, but if we choose ill, it is our choice, and that choice determines our future. God's will is not mediated to humanity through the stars, but from within, for God is, according to Weigel, "nearer to us than we are to ourselves."

According to Andreae, the human being needs only four books to determine the course of his or her life in advance. They are the *Liber Scripturae* (the Bible), the *Liber Vitae* (the Book of life), the *Liber Conscientiae* (the Book of conscience, or consciousness), and the *Liber Naturae* (the Book of nature). Andreae added to his picture of the invisible Hess in the same year as Christian Cosmoxenus in *Herculis Christiani Luctae XXIV* (The twenty-four struggles of the Christian Hercules). Andreae called Hess a "Christian Hercules" four years later in *Immortalitas*, but never mentioned Hess by name in the book dedicated to that figure. The description of Hess as a Christian Hercules in the *Immortalitas* was motivated partly by Hess's unhappy marriage, a picture confirmed by family documents recently uncovered.

The dynamic picture of Hess dominated Andreae's mind for many years. In *Christian Mythologies* (1619), Andreae dedicated a moving chapter to his old friend entitled, "The Opening of the Body of a Dead Pious Man," which sounds like the title of masterpiece by Rembrandt.

In *Immortalitas*, from the same year, Andreae removed the veil entirely; Tobias Hess was "at the same time, father, brother, teacher, friend and comrade." The dead man would even appear on Andreae's list of members of his Christian Society in 1620. Hess's spirit was still moving minds.

Woven into the fabric of nearly all Andreae's work after 1615 are to be found telling and ambivalent comments about the *Fama* and its followers, some of which appear so negative as to give rise in one historian's mind (John Warwick Montgomery, *Cross and Crucible*) to the belief that Andreae was a good orthodox Lutheran engaged in an evangelical effort to Christianize the pagan *Fama*!

Admittedly, some of Andreae's comments taken out of the whole context

might lead one to suppose such a thing. However, as Roland Edighoffer has observed regarding the question of whether Andreae should have been more direct in his assessment of the Rosicrucian furor, it should be understood that the epoch brought with it enormous professional and political risks. These were even more threatening to a young pastor who had already been implicated in a dubious business with his university that had led to temporary rustication and some abiding suspicion.

Apart from employing a method "subtle and corrective," as Edighoffer calls it in his *Rose-Croix*, I think we should also imagine a scenario in which it is almost as if Andreae is looking at the writings of the Rosicrucian commentators, then looking straight across to the figure, alive in his mind, of Tobias Hess. The comparison seems to overwhelm him and, I think, in part accounts for some of the invective that he was prepared to throw at his own invention. He is, as it were, speaking for his absent friend, almost thinking for him. Thus, in *Herculis Christiani*, the reader is informed that all that is to be found in the writings of the Rosicrucians is a "discourse obscure and pretentious, joined to an even more fatal and shameful credulity." Andreae is aware of the moral charges that might be laid against his work, but the accent is on how his work was perceived; the error lies in people's folly that he has, arguably, underestimated.

The point is that how one responds to the *Fama* tells its creator everything about its observer. It is a catalyst and a sword of division—both methods employed self-consciously by Christ himself, whom Christians are called to imitate.

CHYMISCHE HOCHZEIT: CHRISTIANI ROSENKREUZ. ANNO 1459

Andreae was familiar with the classical figure of Proteus. Proteus could transform himself and he could transform the perceptions of those who observed him. There is something protean in the figure of Christian Rosenkreuz. It is possible that Andreae had once been content to use the figure of Christian Rosenkreuz as an image of his idealized self, and as a means or mouthpiece to say many things that occupied his mind. Andreae, the dangerous thinker, hoped to hide, as it were, behind the potent

Rosenkreuz image. Indeed, Andreae was adept at putting his thoughts in the mouths of his creations, as he was later prepared to put his own thoughts in the mouth of the deceased Hess (in the *Immortalitas* and the *Theca*).

A figure so close to his self may have been forced to leave the literary stage, but he was unlikely ever to leave him entirely. At least, no one could object to Christian's Christian name! Christian could become Cosmoxenus because he was a world-stranger; he could become Peregrinus because he was a foreign traveler. He could become Tobias Hess because he *was* Tobias Hess.

Since Rosenkreuz had, in fiction, accomplished the alchemical mystery of regeneration, he could live again—and would live again.

What Andreae objected to was the taking of a portion of himself by those who did not understand him and using—or abusing—him in saying things he would never say, of cheapening what was beyond price, the pearl of his soul and his soul's work. Christian Rosenkreuz would no more offer crass support to apocalyptic warfare than Clark Kent would run a pornography racket.

That Andreae really was his own Christian Rosenkreuz is evident from the first chapter of his mysterious fantasy *The Chemical Wedding*.

> Whereupon the trumpets began to sound again, which gave me such a shock that I woke up, and then first perceived that it was only a dream, but it so strongly impressed my imagination that I was still perpetually troubled about it, and I thought I still felt the wounds on my feet. Howbeit, by all these things I understood well that God had vouchsafed that I should be present at this mysterious and bidden wedding. Wherefore with childlike confidence I returned thanks to his Divine Majesty, and besought him that he would further preserve me in fear of him, that he would daily fill my heart with wisdom and understanding, and at length graciously (without deserting me) conduct me to the desired end.
>
> Hereupon I prepared myself for the way, put on my white linen coat, girded my loins, with a blood-red ribbon bound cross-ways over my shoulder. In my hat I stuck four red roses, so that I might sooner be noticed amongst the throng by this token. For food I took bread, salt and water, which by the counsel of an understanding person I had at certain

times used, not without profit, in similar occurrences.

> But before I left my cottage, I first, in this my dress and wedding garment, fell down upon my knees, and besought God that in case such a thing were, he would vouchsafe me a good issue. And thereupon in the presence of God I made a vow that if anything through his grace should be revealed to me, I would employ it to neither my own honour nor my own authority in the world, but to the spreading of his Name, and the service of my neighbour. And with this vow, and good hope, I departed out of my cell with joy. (*The Chemical Wedding*, The First Day)

This sequence takes place after Christian has awakened from a powerful dream in which he was in a dungeon with many other fettered men fighting furiously among themselves to grab hold of a rope let down for the "chosen" to raise themselves from the rabble. Defending himself with hands and feet from those who deny him access to the rope, Christian, by grace, had taken the rope (at the sixth lowering) and been let out, cutting his head on a sharp stone as he rose from the depths. The scene is a biblical allegory: "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, he shall be winnowed" (Luke 20:17ff, author's translation).

In the morning, Christian takes up his magical invitation and heads off for the wedding of the Sponsus and Sponsa at the mountain "where three temples stand." We can hardly fail to observe his dress. Here is the explanation of the "Rose (or Rosy) Cross" that so many have speculated upon.

Christian puts a blood-red ribbon crossways over his chest and four roses in his hat, that he might be better recognized among the throng; there is an element of pride here. Indeed, there ought to be. The St. Andrew's cross with a rose in each quarter was nothing less than the coat of arms of the Andreae family. He, John Valentine (perhaps the two most gnostic names in early church history), was called to incarnate the ideal Christian.

It is also the case that this figure will be pulled among four kinds of life, as with the cross commemorating the family's patron name-saint, St. Andrew, stretched out and nailed to an *X* that was the first letter of the Greek *Xenos*, a stranger, guest, foreigner, or alien in the world.

These four lives are like four people in one. They are, first, the monk; second, the knight; third, the foreign traveler and explorer; and fourth, the

man or citizen of the world. These figures each had a claim on the psyche of Andreae, and his task was somehow to resolve those claims in, and through, the service of the highest, so that in the end (*The Chemical Wedding* is unfinished), the Wedding might be his.

Dynamic opposites breed paradoxes, and Andreae claimed the right to understand the mystery of his sacred being and his alchemical loves. No image could better illuminate and obscure the paradox of Andreae as does the combination of the Rose and the Cross.

It was perfect, and it was stolen.

Let us look again at the four books recommended to those who would plan the course of their lives in *The Observation of the Horoscope of Christian Cosmoxenus*. They are the *Liber scripturae* (the Bible), the *Liber vitae* (the Book of life), the *Liber conscientiae* (the Book of conscience, or consciousness), and the *Liber naturae* (the Book of nature). The Bible is for the "monk," the Book of Nature is for the "traveler," or explorer, the Book of Life is for the citizen of the world, and is not the Book of Conscience for the "knight" who has the power to divide and to unite, to kill and to save?

In *The Chemical Wedding*, Christian emerges as a Knight of the Golden Stone whose stone has brought gold from blood, whose conscience has been cleaned and who thus has seen Venus naked in the lowest parts of the world, and who has risen again and seen the mountain and learned that "the height of wisdom is to know nothing." We cannot be filled if we are full. We cannot receive God if we are full of ourselves.

The *gnosis* was to know the virtue of Nothing: *Jhesus mihi omnia*.

Thus we see that Andreae, his life, and his creations were one: *Ex Uno Omnia*.

We may then compare this consistent attribute of true genius with the sight that greeted Andreae's eyes when he looked at the tumult surrounding the imagined Rosicrucian Brotherhood.

TURRIS BABEL SIVE JUDICIORUM DE FRATERNITATE ROSACEAE CRUCIS CHAOS

By calling forth such a powerful biblical image as the Tower of Babel, the

fatal construction that its maker thought would link him to the highest but which collapsed under the weight of divine judgment and its own folly, leading to a chaos where people who had formerly spoken one another's tongue found themselves divided, Andreae may have thought he was finally bringing closure to the Rosicrucian furor.

The word chaos appears in bold capitals on the title page of *Turris Babel sive judiciorum de Fraternitate Rosaceae Crucis chaos* (The Tower of Babel, or the chaos of those who judged the Brotherhood of the Rosicrucians; Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1619). This is what the *curiosi*, "the curious," had made of his creation. Their hunt for a magical language had led to a babble of incomprehensible nonsense. Their new age was a fantasy.

The *curiosi* were everything that word suggests. Andreae used it as a blanket word to cover the most immoderate and extreme reactions to the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. The curious were those who looked at spiritual things and straightaway conceived of an occult, exclusive path whose virtue was obscurity, whose method was labyrinthine complexity, and that embraced a mode of discourse that was dishonest from the start and a cover for ignoring the path of hard learning. Such persons ignored the fraternity of Christ and thought they could make another in their own image. About them, Andreae was scathing.

In *Turris Babel*, Fama (Fame) herself appears to give her judgment. She says that the documents taken at face value in her name made absurd promises. How could such a work banish tyranny and constitute a new rule in Europe? Only a fool would believe such things. The *Confessio Fraternitatis* is castigated for employing "ultra human" language, "of Fez or of Damcar."

Products of these "fantasms of the City of Utopia" are named as the *Echo* (Julius Sperber), the *Pandora* (Daniel Mögling), the *Clypeum veritatis* (the shield of truth) by Friedrich Grick, the *Fortalitum scientiae* (the strength of learning) also by Grick, the *Silentum post clamores* (the silence after the noise) by Michael Maier, and the *Speculum sophicum rhodostauroticum* (the mirror of Rosicrucian wisdom) by Daniel Mögling.

The Chemical Wedding is not brought into the debate. Was this a way of implying that not everything about the Fraternity was to be rejected?

Fama's is not the only voice heard at the Tower of Babel's inquest.

Conjectans (Guesser) conjectures that the Fraternity was probably invented by “an ingenious spirit,” while Poenitans (Repentant) declares it was only a fiction but “is perhaps good in certain respects.”

Resipiscens (Reformed) then declares in the presence of Fama:

> There’s a worry that’s bothering me, that is not having established with sufficient care the distinctions between the writings which . . . revealed themselves under the name of the Fraternity. That is to say, there are some which are manifestly games, some are very confused, some of them are bad; some in which the ruse is dissembled; some of them are pious and devoted.
>
> They all testify to a certain erudition, in several it is even very great, but one way or the other all make proof of an evident imposture. Whoever confounds all these writings or estimates that they issue from the same imagination undoubtedly deceives themselves. That is to say, if it was thus, the world would be shown as good, Christ would be rejected, that which is vain would be praised, that which is solid would be blamed, the imposture would be esteemed, reason would be neglected, the lie would be honoured and the truth would be jeered at.
>
> Consequently, if it is certain that I repudiate the Society even of the Fraternity, on the one hand, one will never make me renounce the true Christian Fraternity, that which under the cross, exhales a perfume of roses and wipes away the stains, the ravings and the vanities of the world; on the contrary, I aspire to enter there with whoever is pious, prudent and sagacious.

In Andreae’s summing up, the roses and the cross that have long covered both his head and his heart are retained:

> I shall cultivate the religion of Christ; I shall respect the government of Christ; I shall devote myself to Christian knowledge; I shall embrace the Christian way of life; I shall delight myself with the roses of Christianity and shall bear its cross; I shall uphold Christianity’s order, and shall submit to its discipline; I shall live as a Christian and I shall die as a Christian. And then it will truly happen—to use their words—that IESVS

Fama herself declares: “The play is over.”

But of course it was not. The same declaration would be made in 1620 in *De curiositatis pernicie syntagma ad singularitatis studiosos* (Treatise on the curse of curiosity intended by the amateurs of singularity).

Referring to the “vanity of the affair,” the author tells us, “The *Fama* which had convoked them [a great number of people], has sent them away . . . and I think there are still some of them whose obstinacy will be such that they will want to persist in baking bricks to bring to the mortar for this invisible construction.”

Such statements are full of ambiguities, and there are quite a lot more of them, used with differing effects for different purposes. The behavior of the *curiosi* had given Andreae a new teaching tool, a fresh image in which to encapsulate the follies of the world. This insight into the world’s labyrinthine madness had been revealed by the effect of the “invisible construction” that was both absurd and continually revealing.

MYTHOLOGIAE CHRISTIANAE SIVE VIRTUTEM ET VITIORUM VITAE HUMANAE IMAGINUM LIBRI TRES

One can see the pleasure Andreae initially took from the sport in a speech given to Alethea (Truth) in his *Three Books of Christian Mythologies* (Strasbourg, Lazarus Zetzner, 1619):

> When it came about, not a long time since, that some on the literary stage were arranging a play scene of certain ingenious parties, I stood aside as one who looks on, having regard to the fashion of the age which seizes with avidity on new-fangled notions. As spectator, it was not without a certain quality of zest that I beheld the battle of the books and marked subsequently an entire change of actors.

However, “Truth exiled” could now only see “clouds and chimaeras.” It was now the case that “the joke of a certain rosy fraternity” had been at the

same time “the birdlime and the stone of stumbling” of all the *curiosi*. A nicely phrased joke indeed, birdlime being both a building glue and “pure shit.” The stone of stumbling, or stumbling block, is a reference to Christ’s comment on Psalm 118: “What is this then that is written [Psalm 118, 22–24a], The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, he shall be winnowed” (Luke 20:17ff, author’s translation).

Whereas Christian Rosenkreuz was gracefully “hit by the stone,” the *curiosi* were simply shattered by it. The stone is the rock of truth which there is no getting around. Like the Philosopher’s Stone, everywhere found but nowhere seen. This was the stone that, though the head of the corner, the builders nevertheless rejected.

The curious, like grunting mutants crowding about an object fallen from a higher civilization, were aware of a spiritual reality but simply got it wrong as a result of their vanity. They then obstructed the work of the good, as well as themselves.

Jesus was crucified by “true believers.”

There was, in the eyes of Truth, a double edge to this game or *ludibrium*. Alethea recognizes that on one hand it was a dangerous, even fatal game (think of poor Adam Haslmayr!); then again, in a protean flash, that it was no more than “a quite ingenious game, that a person behind the scenes wanted to play on the literary scene, especially in an age which is infatuated with all that is immoderate.”

Is Andreae implying that the world was asking for it?

But Lady Truth had more to reveal than an inquiry into the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. Things were happening in Germany that needed her attention, exiled as she currently was from the religious and political scene. Andreae would have to speak out. Typically, he did so with a mask, a paradoxical mask. In *Christian Mythologies*, the mask is truth. But, he says, should she (Truth) hide herself, the very stones would cry out: “We are not going, by the horror of our predecessors’ faults, to sin by default where they sinned by excess.” The reference seems to be the failure of the Reformation to reform itself and to reform the hearts of those it was intended to reach and teach. This was also a theme of the *Mythologies*’ predecessor, *Menippus* (1618),

which we must also examine.

The title page of *Christian Mythologies* is almost encyclopedic in itself: two pillars, one surmounted by Theologia with cross and eucharistic cup, the other by Politica with scales of justice and sword. Illustrations on the left pillar show Mathematica, Physica, and Grammatica. On the right, beneath Politica: Historia, Mechanica (illustrated with set square, dividers, and plumb line), and Agricultura. At the base of theological pillar is the word *Truth;* beneath the political pillar is the word *Good*. In the center at the top, a blazing sun contains the name Jesus in the first three letters of the Greek, *IHS*, beneath which is the question *Quid si sic?* (What if thus?)

Johann Valentin Andreae, *Mythologiae Christianae sive virtutum et vitiorum vitae humanae imaginum, libri tres;* Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1619. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Christian Mythologies is a collection of allegories and stories employed to examine a land of errors that has not generally been recognized as the land its readers or should-be readers were living in. Alchemists, astrological calendar-makers, the Rosicrucian furor, the class system, skepticism, the

universities—all are held to account. Perhaps the greatest mythology confronted by Andreae's never-swerving pen was the widely held view that Europe was a Christian continent.

How could it be when Truth herself was exiled from it?

> If anyone dares saying that one should not let the unworthy become teachers and doctors, then he is immediately interpreted as trying to undermine the upper-classes. If a man says that the young should learn languages, then he gets the answer that you should emigrate to the Garamants of Libya. Should one criticise that the doctor and tutor title could only be had by paying large sums of money, the answer comes back that society cannot consist of tailors and cobblers alone. If one maintained the view that to address people with very long titles is barbaric, then you would be for all times proclaimed as an adherent of Karlstadt [the Anabaptist radical]. And if one further objected that the poor people are treated like animals, this would mean refusal to accept your superiors. If a man should preach reciprocal love, he would immediately be called a Rosicrucian. If you would ask for more freedom, the people would fear that all the barriers were coming down. And more: if you don't like to swear, then you're an Anabaptist. If you dislike boozing and feasting, then you're a Papist; if you fight against prostitution, then you will be taken for a fanatic and a dreamer; if you try not to lie, then you must be a disciple of Schwenckfeld; and if lastly you dislike pictures and pomp, then you are certainly taken to be a Calvinist.

Andreae swipes his way through the "birdlime" of his times and tells it like it is. One of the many remarkable strokes in a very remarkable book is Andreae's extraordinarily visual inversion of the discovery of the tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz.

Men should certainly be seeking something, Andreae implies, but whether they will find it may depend on how they respond to the following scene.

Cunningly, Andreae links his vision of the *curiosi* with his description of the corruption of his times—a tour de force that ought to rank Andreae among the greatest writers of European history. But then, Andreae was not waiting for the trumpet of Fame; he was blowing it himself.

Andreae envisions a scene in which a number of his contemporaries, following certain indices, discover a secret vault. The explorers break down a wall. Torches in hand, they enter the darkness. Inside the vault, they discover a modest sarcophagus with an inscription upon it: *mea tempora*—my times. The men anxiously remove the lid. Inside the sarcophagus lies a cadaver, horribly mutilated, soiled, and decaying, the flesh consumed. After great effort they succeed in uncovering a fine bronze plaque by the cadaver's rotting head:

I, THE TRUTH
DAUGHTER OF GOD
ASSASSINATED
BY THE DUPLICITY OF SATAN
BY THE CORRUPTION OF THE WORLD
BY THE FEEBLENESS OF THE FLESH
BY THE DESPOTISM OF TYRANNY
BY THE INDOLENCE OF THE PRIESTS
BY THE MALIGNITY OF POLITICS
BY THE SUPERFICIALITY OF HISTORIANS
BY THE FOLLY OF THE WISE
BY THE STUPIDITY OF THE PEOPLE

I REST HERE
WITHIN THE SHIT OF THE LIE
IN ONE HUNDRED YEARS
THE SUN WILL SEE ME AGAIN
GREETINGS O POSTERITY!

This is the tomb of Truth. In a startling image, Andreae succeeded in condensing his entire outlook and the real substance of the *Fama* as well.

The story continues. Truth's epitaph is published to mixed reaction. Some are sad, others joyful. The past is vilified for not understanding the error. One observer exalts the present, another erects a magnificent monument to dignify the rediscovered Truth, adding the following words to those on the plaque:

If we had lived
in the times of our fathers

We would have been their accomplices
in the assassination of the Truth

The Truth *is* assassinated.

Truth, says Andreae, is not to be found in the universities of the world but in the *sacra universitas*, the holy city, whose door proclaims: *The Word of God*. Rejected by the masses, dishonored by the philosophers and pseudosavants, unwanted at court, and repudiated by the church, Truth had no choice but to exile herself.

In Andreae's dialogue between Philalethes (Lover of truth) and Alethea (Truth), the former seeks refuge in Eleutheropolis (from the Greek *eleutheros*, liberty), the City of Liberty, but this country of Liberty is only a utopia. Besides, Truth is faithful and still hopes that the darkness extending over Germany is only an eclipse, and that at some time the Light—not the "last light of the apocalypse" but the Light of Truth—will shine again in all its startling glory.

As for the Rosicrucian Fraternity:

> Most indubitably I—Alethea [Truth]—hold nothing in common with this Brotherhood. . . . Seeing that at this present the theatre is filled with altercations, with a great clash of opinion, that the fight is carried on by vague hints and malicious conjectures, I have withdrawn myself utterly, that I may not be involved unwisely in so dubious and slippery a concern.

The road to *Christian Mythologies* had first been paved by another work of powerful perception and rasping invective. That work bore the name of Menippus, a Cynic philosopher famous for his bitter sarcasm. It was entitled *Menippus sive dialogorum satyricorum centuria inanitatum nostratium speculum. In grammatticorum gratiam castigatum, Cosmopoli* (Menippus or one hundred inane satirical dialogues mirroring ourselves. A kindly grammatical chastisement. City of the Cosmos; Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1618).

In October 1617, the Lutheran states of Germany celebrated the centenary of the Reformation. While Tübingen worked itself up into a tizzy, Andreae saw through the sham. As far as he was concerned, Luther and his friends had been betrayed by a fantasy. The liberty of the Gospel had been smothered by

caesaro-papist hypocrisy. The true reformation of the heart had hardly even begun.

While Lutherans celebrated “100 years of freedom,” Ferdinand, persecutor of the Styrian Protestants, had been advanced to the thrones of Hungary and Bohemia and was planning to succeed his elderly cousin Matthias as Holy Roman Emperor.

The title page of *Menippus* gives its place of origin as Cosmopoli, City of the Cosmos, or City of the World. The outlook of those at whom the book was aimed was too small. To rub the point in, it was dedicated to the “sensible and simple” people of the Antipodes, implying that Andreae’s own hemisphere was ridiculous.

Carlos Gilly has described *Menippus* as a product of the “radical leftwing of the Reformation.” There is something in this designation. The Sixty-first Discourse, for example, advocates full religious tolerance. A person’s belief should not be something owed to the state in which he was born. All religions contain good people.

Following the Spanish radical Giacomo Aconcio, Andreae declared all theological disputes to be unimportant; heretics did not exist. Heresy was a product of a theologian’s brain. Why, Andreae asked, is it always pious people who are branded as impious or heretical? University professors should pay attention to the “exemplary martyrdom” of Anabaptists, constantly rejected by those who consider themselves educated. Christ will recognize His own, said Andreae, even in the flames.

Andreae denied Christians’ claim to make religious judgments. Anyone could see that so-called Christians had surpassed even the barbarians in cruelty and torture, often administered over matters where no definitive judgment existed, frequently applied in dark places with torture instruments, threats, and fire. Those who shouted loudest against the Machiavellian character of the aristocracy were themselves the most Machiavellian. Machiavellianism had always existed. All Machiavelli was doing was making plain the usual politicking of the ruling classes.

Andreae’s grasp of the facts was deeply upsetting to conservatives. Caspar Bücher, Tübingen’s professor of oratory, described *Menippus* as an “alchemical abortion” and its masked author as one who bit the hand that fed him, consigning him to the ranks of low-class ranters and haters of learning

such as Karlstadt, the notorious anti-intellectual and Anabaptist radical. Bücher hinted that all the world knew who this Menippus was; everyone knew he belonged to the circle that used to gather about Tobias Hess, and that they planned a quixotic "reformation of the whole world."

Was Andreae thinking of Bücher and his slander against his late friend Hess when he wrote the following in *The Immortality of Hess*, published in the following year?

> Now, where are you, who force your paper peerage down everyone's throat, while he [Hess] covered his noble birth, you, who pretend to have friends in the highest circles, where he just stayed away from them; you, who beg the great ones to tip you, while he disdained huge salaries, you, who gather the crumbs of the rich, while he did not wish to brush shoulders with the upper-classes. No-one else but our Hess would have been able to resist the temptations of court life, the ambushes of money and the tickles of homages, for he was inaccessible to the invitations of the wealthy, but free and open-handedly reacted to requests of anybody else.

According to German historian Wilhelm Kühlmann, *Menippus* was "a satire which cannot be more highly regarded as the summing-up of the conflicts of an entire epoch."

Andreae's Eighty-sixth Discourse, entitled "Paradoxa," had absorbed the mind of radical reformer Sebastian Franck's own Paradoxa, especially Franck's observation that "*quo doctorium, eo perversiorum*," a damning phrase compressed by Andreae into one swift brush of spiritual graffito—*the learned are perverted.*

In 1531, spiritual preacher Sebastian Franck (1499–1542) had been kicked out of Strasbourg, accused of being a revolutionary. Andreae declares in *Menippus* that the truth has always been revolutionary. How dare the academics stand by in postures of arrogance and conceit while good men and women go to the stake in the name of the very thing the universities should have been most concerned with, namely, the Truth?

Theology, says Andreae, is an experience, not a science. While the will and thoughts are free, no judgment should restrict them. Here was a theme

that had already been launched in the *Fama*: “The pride and covetousness of the learned is so great, it will not suffer them to agree together.”

Menippus’s Twenty-third Dialogue tells how the pious must starve because they give themselves freely, without the pretensions of those loaded with honors and awards, titles and rights. The Twenty-fourth Dialogue complains about the unnecessary complexities of books of learning that prevent good people from finding God, while the teachers bandy about insults, calling anyone following his or her own holy way a heretic or an Anabaptist.

The Twenty-fifth Dialogue must have gone down in Tübingen like the proverbial lead balloon. According to *Menippus*, the universities were devoid of meaning, cloisters of vanity, time-wasting bullshit, intolerance of dissent, flattery, hypocrisy, idle talk, lying; while the dissemblers, armed to the gills with “Scholastic guns,” aimed their weapons at Christ and his foolish disciples while the whole dripping, gluttonous system ruled over the poor like a sultanate gorged on its own pretentiousness.

As if all that were not sufficient content for one little book of satire, *Menippus* also included a fascinating playlet in which Andreae made his thoughts on Magic and Science abundantly clear, a point of view as crisply valid today as it was nearly four hundred years ago. *Institutio pro magica curiosis* (Institution for the magic of the curious) clarifies what kind of mind was behind the Rosicrucian experiment, what kind of mind had abused it (and would continue to abuse it), and what kind of mind could, if it would, get the best out of it.

INSTITUTIO PRO MAGICA CURIOSIS (EDUCATION FOR THOSE CURIOUS ABOUT MAGIC)

The drama cited above begins in the study of one Christianus, on whom the eager seeker Curiosus has decided to pay a call. Christianus does seem to bear a striking resemblance to a certain Johann Valentin Andreae—or was it Tobias Hess?

CURIOSUS: Why are you so alone, Christianus?

CHRISTIANUS: If you call this being alone, Curiosus, then be assured I am my own company, and the same goes for all my advisers.

CURIOSUS: Have I disturbed your visitors? It seems they've all fled.

CHRISTIANUS: No, Curiosus, not at all. They're still here. There's Seneca, Tacitus, De Thou, Zwinger, Henning, Mercator . . . Shall I introduce any more to you?

CURIOSUS: It is said, Christianus, that you have knowledge of all things, both serious and diverting.

CHRISTIANUS: Excellent.

CURIOSUS: And, this is the most important point—that you have achieved all this within the space of one or two years.

CHRISTIANUS: And of course, as well as that, I'm able to produce gold and nourish the eternal flame!

CURIOSUS: All agree on one point; that you are a *magician*.

CHRISTIANUS: *Magician* is an ambitious name, don't you think? Perhaps you mean *necromancer*?

CURIOSUS: I am not quite sure of the distinction but I mean the person who through intimacy with and servitude to the spirits achieves great and wonderful things.

CHRISTIANUS: I would rather prefer another definition of necromancy. But please tell me, do you really believe I am able to do the things you just mentioned?

I wish it were enough for you and the rest of mankind to find peace of mind, when for the brief period you are allowed to walk—or stroll—about the earth, you can feed your body as expediently as possible with the least shouting or fuming about.

Well then, Curiosus, as it is now of prime importance to become a magician, or a wise man, we must incessantly invoke God's help.

CURIOSUS: Excellent.

CHRISTIANUS: So, please write here, on the first line of your piece of paper "Invocation of God."

CURIOSUS: That's done.

CHRISTIANUS: Now please, examine yourself, whether you have been born with an earthy, an airy, or a fiery character.

CURIOSUS: This is all new to me.

CHRISTIANUS: You force me to consider opening up for you, a thing as yet known to nobody, not even to my brethren.

CURIOSUS: Please do.

CHRISTIANUS: But would I dare to entrust you with my secrets, lest they reach the common people?

CURIOSUS: Here, I give you my right hand in promise.

CHRISTIANUS: Please, Curiosus. Please consider, and consider again, where you lead me—for necromancy is a very serious business.

CURIOSUS: Please trust me, and if I fail you, so may the supreme God have me —

CHRISTIANUS: Please do not swear! I cannot stand it. I will believe you without any oaths. But tell me, are you really longing for this magic of mine?

CURIOSUS: Very much indeed, if only it can be exercised with a clear conscience.

CHRISTIANUS: Why! As surely as if you were studying the Bible itself.

CURIOSUS: Christianus, I have always been in favour of Melancthon's adagium: "We have to close our eyes together with nature, and open then up again with the same," by which he meant the sun. I must confess, however, that in closing my eyes I very often controverted nature, as much as in opening up I dragged long behind.

CHRISTIANUS: If followed exactly, Melancthon's advice is very sound indeed.

CURIOSUS: So . . . your magic is nothing more than this?

CHRISTIANUS: By the Holy Trinity, there is no other magic but the persistent study of the different sciences.

CURIOSUS: If I follow your advice, I might as well throw my studies overboard and start work as a craftsman or a sailor.

CHRISTIANUS: What you say there is not bad, but it's what you're thinking when you're saying it.

CURIOSUS: Would you make a farmer or a mining expert out of me?

CHRISTIANUS: No, Curiosus, all I want to do is to make a philosopher out of you, so that you may become a citizen of this world—and not the alien wanderer.

CURIOSUS: And that special art whereby you can learn all sorts of things in no time at all?

CHRISTIANUS: Have I not told you that this Art is called hard work and perseverance?

You know, Curiosus, there is no limit to my amazement when I see that in our age—although it will forever be known as a very happy and erudite one—there are so few people who investigate our Creator's wisdom in his creations and the structures of his wonderful machine—as only a few generations ago men like Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin, Cardanus and others pioneered in this field.

The foremost stars of learning and the princes of the arts were always highly versed in many branches of science. This is testified in their books, densely filled with every kind of knowledge.

Among the savants, the most excellent was Julius Caesar Scaliger, a man of wonderful erudition, so that to whatever subject he turned his attention, nowhere did he find his equal.

CURIOSUS: Perhaps he too was a magician.

CHRISTIANUS: O Curiosus! You always sing the same old song. Everything that is inelegant, unlearned and vulgar is God's intention. But if it be spiritual, rare and admirable, then it is taken as the devil's work. But it was God who gave man a mind so aristocratic that when we refine our mind and abstain from worldly matters, then we can work Wonders.

CURIOSUS: Do you have anything to say on medicine?

CHRISTIANUS: By all means. As there has taken place such a great accession of new land, that the world is now known to be twice as big as before—and all this has been meticulously described, can you doubt that medicine too will make some progess? Is it such an absurd idea to try to reconcile—at least in part—Galenus and Paracelsus—as both ways round it appears that the one's remedies are not always happily applied and the other's not

always unhappily—and as we cannot be sure whether Galenus, had he lived today, would not have borrowed a few things from chemistry. We know that this was done by—amongst others—the famous arch-physician Josephus Quercetanus, a thing greatly enhancing his reputation, but even more beneficial to his patients!

In the meantime, the other members of the medical profession are poised in perpetual battle array—as if they were to fight for their altars and hearths—with such bitterness that many a patient has already succumbed to his pains amidst such sighing and suffering, as from neither side any helping hand is offered.

As to mathematicians, I take the same line. From them I only demand one thing; they should exactly show me the celestial phenomena—regardless of whether the earth moves within them and the sun is fixed, or the sun moves and the earth is at rest, or the earth moves in one place and turns around its own axis &c. All these things are beyond proof to us. For not because we think one way or another will the sun move rather than be fixed. Let it suffice for us to measure time exactly to get a clue to the harmony God has equipped all things with.

CURIOSUS: Goodbye, Christianus. Carry on ridiculing men's folly.

CHRISTIANUS: That I will do. But for now, goodbye.

Andreae was doubtless more shaken by the vehemence of the opposition to *Menippus* than Christianus was by the dreams and preconceptions of Curiosus, but Andreae steadied himself with the backing of his friends and the knowledge that to serve Christianity was to serve the truth.

Over the next few years, while carrying the same anchor, Andreae would change his tack. This reorientation resulted in a bouquet of some of the most beautiful works of Christian devotion ever written, classics-to-be of the movement that would, by the end of the century, blossom as Pietism. Pietism was a Christianity that stressed the imitation of Christ and honest good works, as well as an inward, heartfelt spirituality comfortable with both an alchemically influenced spiritual language (often derived from Böhme and Paracelsus) and an open, sober approach to science.

In the future, the wayward child of the Pietist would, of course, be apt to

become fascinated by Magic—or what he or she might come to call Rosicrucianism. To such a one might be shown Andreae's corrective playlet, the *Institutio magica pro curiosis*, or any one of the following works of the mature Andreae:

Invitatio fraternitatis Christi ad sacri amoris candidatos (An invitation to the candidates of the holy love of the brotherhood of Christ; Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1617)

Civis Christianus sive Peregrini quondam errantis restitutiones (A Christian citizen, or the restoration of a onetime wandering foreigner; Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1619)

Christianae societatis imago (An image of a Christian society; Tübingen, Eberhard Wild, 1620)

Christiani amoris dextera porrecta (The right hand of Christian love extended; Ebenda, 1620)

Only the heart inhabited by God is really cognizant of authentic philosophy. This is not a view that would be recognized by most contemporary incumbents of philosophical chairs. Andreae, however, was in no doubt that the supreme or higher reason required one not to listen to human reason but to believe in the omnipresent and omniscient God. In the light of this process, science had a profound purpose and goal. What more beautiful task awaits the savant, asks Andreae in his invitation to join the fraternity of Christ, than to study the admirable machine of the universe and to discover the wisdom of its creator therein—prolonged and arduous as this task may be?

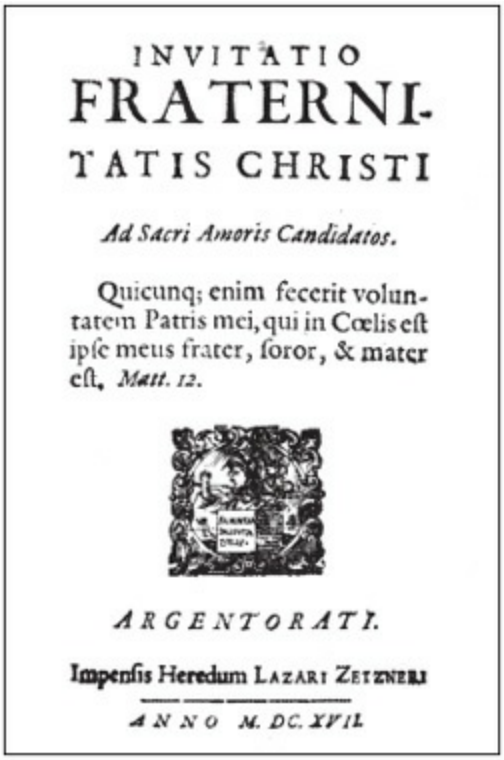
Andreae links the life of this fraternity to the exploration of nature. Thus, we recognize the practical value of Andreae's contrast of hardworking Christianus with get-enlightenment-quick Curiosus. Curiosus does not wish to hang around that great rock called *Hard Work* for very long; he wants the angels to do his bidding, but he will not learn their language. Where renunciation is required, he offers lust for power. According to Andreae, the true scientist, if he or she is to be true, needs be a person in accord with the God whose Mind is discernible in all things. To those who do not discern nature this way, God may only be a delusion, but who is most deluded?

According to Andreae, the search for truth requires self-mastery or Christian discipleship. He characterizes the greater part of humankind as the *curiosi*, forever distracted by the latest new thing, unconsciously gripped by the Satan of the world. Trapped among the vanities of the world, they dwell in chains they cannot feel.

The aim of study is to regenerate the human being, who, on becoming regenerate, is made son or daughter, brother or sister, and heir to the wealthiest fraternity imaginable: true cosmic citizenship.

Andreae invited his readers not to an imaginary fraternity, but to a real and spiritual one. Is it any surprise that there was no furor, no rush of people desperate to join up, no pan-European flurry of pamphlets and books?

The *Fama* was a mirror of the world; response revealed the state of mind of the respondent. The *Invitatio* revealed the world as a spiritual desert, far from Damcar.


INVITATIO
FRATERNI-
TATIS CHRISTI

Ad Sacri Amoris Candidatos.

Quicunq; enim fecerit voluntatem Patris mei, qui in Cœlis est ipſe meus frater, ſoror, & mater eſt, *Matt. 12.*

ARGENTORATI.

Impensis Heredum LAZARI ZETZNERI

ANNO M. DC. XVII.

Johann Valentin Andreae, *Invitatio fraternitatis Christi ad sacri amoris candidatos;* Strasbourg, Zetzner, 1617. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Andreae knew the *Fama* was not entirely in vain, however absurd much of

the response to it had turned out to be. In his preface to *Christianopolis* (1619)—a work in full spiritual and typological kinship with the above titles—Andreae points out three stages of the Rosicrucian Fraternity experience. First, the *Fama* offered fodder for the *curiosi*, for the lovers of the marvelous, of things fantastic, enormous, immoderate, and extreme; second, it aroused a great hope of seeing an amelioration of the miseries of religious, political, and intellectual life; third, it asserted the imitation of Christ. This latter was the third point in a process that mirrored Clement of Alexandria's second-century advocacy of three stages for the Christian life: first, *faith*—often evoked through pictures and the entertaining of the miraculous; second, knowledge (*gnosis*)—when faith becomes secured in the spiritual intellect; third, sacred love—when the candidate is joined to the life of the angels.

According to Andreae, the invitation to the fraternity of Christ—a truly invisible fraternity in this world—is an invitation that even Christian Rosenkreuz must take up if he is to fulfill his whole nature in the full grace of his creator. Sadly, the greater part of bustling, hungry humanity would rather have Rosenkreuz in a state of magical imagination and personal illusion than take the next step that even he, whom they most claim to admire, must and will take. But this should come as no surprise to sympathetic readers of the *Invitatio*, for in that work Andreae contrasts this world, inspired and governed by Satan, with the tiny number of real Christians, secure on the perfidious ocean in the little barca of Christ whose mast is the cross.

In *Civis Christianus*, the candidate is invited to look within, to discover Nature and the City of God, invisible to the nonregenerated, but already active in the Christians scattered in the world. As an incitement for the hoped for epiphany of that church, Andreae made a kind of movie of what it would be like to visit there. This was accomplished in his description of the *Christianopolitan Republic* or *Christianopolis* (1619).

It should be noted that unlike Luther, who saw two separate worlds that called on the Christian's allegiance—that of God and that of the sovereign state—Andreae always believed in the Christian Respublica, castigating sovereigns who neglected their spiritual duties and praising and supporting those who did not separate themselves from the common spiritual duties. He would favor a constitutional monarchy so long as the constitution's cornerstone was the fullness of Christ, not secular and illusory self-

advantage. Andreae would be as critical of the majority of Europe's politicians today as he was of the caesar-popes of is own time—probably more so.

Andreae's "Right Hand of Christian Love Extended" (1620) made a call of union to sincere Christians. Andreae saw the terrible war looming that would engulf the country for so many utterly ruinous years—a war that separated Christ's members into opposite camps, injuring all. The true Christian would recognize and be in accord with the horizontal dimension of love and brotherhood and the vertical dimension of the love of God. The Christian exists at the suffering center of this cross, in love with God and God in humankind.

THE SOCIETAS CHRISTIANA

"An Image of a Christian Society" (also written in the desperate year of 1620) proposed an organization, the Societas Christiana, under the patronage of a sympathetic prince.

The society would have three coordinating offices: one for moral and religious life; another for political, economic, and social questions; and a third for scientific and technical activities. Unlike the *fratres R.C.*, no subversive or immoderate actions were proposed. The members were simply to be "friends of God," dispersed in society but united in one faith, whose work would be the amelioration of social, moral, and intellectual life while assisting each other through the storms into which Europe was about to be engulfed for thirty long and terrible years.

Andreae dreamed that this brotherhood would attract the patronage of Duke August of Brunswick (1579–1666). This choice was probably for three reasons. First, Andreae's inspirational guide Johann Arndt exercised his ministry in the principality of Braunschweig (Brunswick)-Lüneburg. Second, Andreae's friend Wilhelm von der Wense (1586–1641), a man related to Lüneburg nobility, had suggested his suzerain, August, as patron of the society. Third, such a patron would expand the possibilities of the society from its southern Swabian base (in the person of Andreae) to the north of Germany.

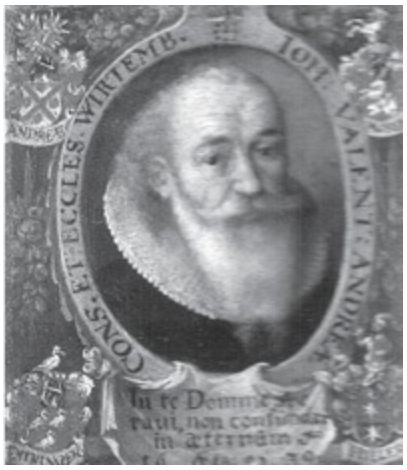
Andreae did not meet Duke August until 1630, and it was not for another

ten years before a rich correspondence (over six hundred letters sent by each to the other) flourished between them. In a letter of July 26, 1642, as the painful civil war got under way in Britain, Duke August acknowledged receipt of two "lovely little treatises" from Andreae. They were the *Christianae societatis imago* and the *Christiani amoris dextera porrecta*.

Andreae also sent a list of the original signatories to the Societas Christiana to the duke in Wolfenbüttel. They were as follows: Johannes Arndt (Celle), Johannes Gerhard (Jena), Christoph Schleupner (Hof), Johannes Saubert (Nürnberg), Polycarp Lyser (Leipzig), Daniel Sennert (Wittenberg), Lorenz Lälius (Ansbach), Wilhelm von der Wense (Altenberg), Tobias Adami (Altenberg), Konrad Dieterich (Ulm), Balthasar Gochelius (Ulm), Thomas Wegelin (Strasbourg), Matthias Bernegger (Strasbourg), Christoph Besold (Tübingen), Tobias Hess (Tübingen, deceased), Wilhelm Schickard (Tübingen), Johann Jacob Heinlin (Tübingen), Wilhelm Bidenbach (Stuttgart), Georg Achatius Enenkel von Hoheneck, (Ludwigsburg), Daniel Hizler (Linz), Michael Zeller (Vienna), Balthasar Roggendorff (Vienna), Joachim Wickeford (Amsterdam), and Erhard Machtolt (Durlach).

The Christian Society was placed under the protection of the duke, "a man illustrious in piety, uprightness, and letters." One of its aims was to coordinate the offices for the betterment of religion, society, and science so that they would provide the contents for a projected encyclopedia.

Roland Edighoffer has called attention to this work's anticipating such learned societies as the Royal Society, the French Academy, and the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft (Fruit-bearing Society) founded by Ludwig von Anhalt, to which Andreae was admitted in 1646 with the name Fracidus (an overripe olive!). He was also given an emblem, a tree covered in moss with the motto "He is still green"—an epithet many politicians in Britain and Germany today would wish to share.



Johann Valentin Andreae, aged fifty-three. (Artwork courtesy of the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart.)

In 1651, Andreae's previous year's appointment as abbot and prelate of Bebenhausen was followed by his appointment as superintendent general, an office equivalent to that of an archbishop.

Johann Valentin Andreae, still light under the weight of office, passed out of this world in Stuttgart in 1654, aged sixty-seven.

TWELVE

THE ROSE CROSS IN BRITAIN

And he came near, and kissed him and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

GENESIS 27:27–29

In 1804, the German historian Johann Gottlieb Buhle wrote a history of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry, *Über des Ursprung und die vornehmsten Schichsale der Orden der Rosenkreuzer und Freymaurer: Eine historisch-kritische Untersuchnung* (Göttingen, 1804). Buhle believed it was the arrival of Rosicrucian material in England that somehow provided the stimulus that transformed trade associations of working freemasons or architects into so-called speculative Freemasons. He reckoned the transformation took place sometime between about 1630 and 1640. Chief protagonist of the transformation was, Buhle believed, the English Paracelsian pansophist Dr. Robert Fludd.

Buhle's ideas have proved popular in some quarters, not least because they offer a coherent account of a transformation that is other wise very difficult to account for. For example, we know that there was a Free Masons' lodge made up principally of gentlemen in Warrington (Cheshire) in 1646 and a

gathering of “accepted” Free Masons made up chiefly of senior members of the London Masons’ Company in 1682, and we know that something called an Accepcon (Acception) cost ten shillings for senior members of the trade to participate in as early as 1638.

We know there were a number of lodges made up of gentlemen (but linked with the trade) around the country by the end of the seventeenth century. However, we know practically nothing of the ideology that may or may not have predominated at lodges during this period.

Then, in 1723, a body calling itself a grand lodge and centered in London with an aristocratic Grand Master at the helm produced a set of new Constitutions and claimed to be sole inheritor of all Free and Accepted Masonry that had preceded its appearance since the days of Adam. This novel body severed all institutional ties between itself and the trade of masonry. Apparently, the grand lodge did not require a specific trade association, because its purpose was social and, to some extent, ideological (the Constitutions have been called a kind of manifesto of the Enlightenment).

There was no reference to Rosicrucianism in the Constitutions; it was asserted that Masonry was an antediluvian body, from which other orders (including chivalric orders) derived. Its source could be found in the Bible. (The same claim of antediluvian origin, it should be noted, had been made by Julius Sperber’s “Echo of the God-enlightened Fraternity” of the Rosicrucians in 1617.)

It may be convincingly argued that every scrap of ideology encouraged in the Constitutions of the Free and Accepted Masons has a Rosicrucian precedent, from the apotheosis of geometry and the refinement of technical knowledge to the advocacy of freedom of religious confession. These ideas derive from, or have their precedent in, beliefs harbored among those favoring Rosicrucian writings in the previous century. Indeed, once analyzed, the ideological content of the Constitutions may be seen as a fairly tepid abstract of some of the most idealistic elements of Rosicrucianism, shorn of controversial religious material and gathered together in a style at once innocuous and comforting. The resultant harmonious blend was situated under a benign ruling aristocrat, dispensing reason and pacific proportion to an otherwise politically fractured state.

Thus, there have been many attempts to prove that “speculative

Freemasonry" (now a global phenomenon) derived from a Rosicrucian initiative, a very pleasing hypothesis for the historian on account of its simple logic. In its favor, the hypothesis also provides an explanation as to why Freemasonry, after it arrived on the Continent (after 1730), gradually found itself attractive to those who remembered the Rosicrucian movement of the previous century and sought to pull the two traditions (if they had in fact ever been truly separate) so closely together as to make them, in many instances, indistinguishable.

Unfortunately, definitive, as opposed to circumstantial, evidence for a seventeenth-century transformation has been extremely hard to come by, and the effort has proved to be as tantalizing—if not more so—as that put into discovering the identity of the "original" Rosicrucians. The Invisibles proved to be just as invisible in London in the mid- to late-seventeenth century as they had been in Paris in 1623.

Admittedly, people involved in the spirit of Rosicrucian enterprises do not go public to suit the needs of historians, and it should therefore be borne in mind that whereas in general historical methodology, lack of evidence denotes an untenable hypothesis, in the case of explicitly secret movements, lack of evidence may simply mean lack of knowledge. However, a few peaks have emerged from the ocean to tantalize the scholar. For example, the two recorded occasions of gentlemen meeting in lodges in England in 1646 and 1682 both included the seminal figure of Elias Ashmole (1617–1692). Ashmole even described himself as the "senior fellow" at the 1682 meeting—and contemporary evidence asserts that Ashmole was "accounted a great Rosicrucian" (though another contemporary acquaintance of Ashmole's denied it). "Rosicrucian" meant different things to different people in mid- to late-seventeenth-century Britain.

Ashmole, we know, at some time in the 1650s (after his initiation as a Free Mason), made a private petition for himself to be accepted by the Fraternity R.C. Ashmole was also of interest to another man fired by the Rosicrucian mythology, Samuel Hartlib, and there was overlap between some of the founding figures of the Royal Society and men with Rosicrucian-type interests.

Elias Ashmole, Windsor Herald, by Cornelis de Neve (1660s). (Photographed by kind permission of Sir William Dugdale, Bt., Blyth Hall, Warwickshire.)

Ashmole's learned acquaintance (and first president of the Royal Society) Sir Robert Moray (d. 1673), for example, was an admitted mason to a Scottish stonemasons' lodge (St. Mary's Chapel, Edinburgh, 1641) and also very interested indeed in the kind of technical and spiritual material associated with the name "Rosicrucian." Nevertheless, further researches into these associations have not—perhaps until now—furnished a picture of the actual machinery whereby a Continental idea may have been able to infiltrate, as it were, a trade body and abstract some of its activities for a novel purpose.

One of the sticking points has always been that the German movement, rooted in German religious and scientific issues within its own distinct political context, was never able to generate the kind of furor in Britain that it did in its homeland. It is very doubtful if Elias Ashmole, for example, ever really understood the true background to the German movement. He, like others (including Robert Fludd in the previous generation), took from it what suited his own interests and, in Ashmole's case, subsumed its character into the larger picture of his Hermetic narrative of reformation of the ancient sciences.

Ashmole believed that alchemy and astrology would undergo not only an epoch-marking revival, but a significant technical refinement as well. He believed that "the more pregnant philosophers," as he called them, would bring alchemy and astrology to the level of demonstrable, incontrovertible experimental science. This was his hope. Indeed, notably, Ashmole even set a date for the genesis of this transformation.

Like his Continental counterparts—and his hero John Dee—Ashmole looked to the theory of trigons to make his prediction. Ashmole calculated there would be a significant conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the fiery trigon in the year 1663.

It is likely that he expected this promise to be fulfilled by the establishment of the Royal Society (of which he was a founding member) and other scientific and educational initiatives, one of which he led himself (the foundation of the world's first purpose-built museum and chemical laboratory at Oxford). It is also the case that alchemist George Starkey (1628–1665) and physicist Isaac Newton (1642–1727) endeavored in this period to bring the alchemical inheritance to the level of systematic scientific discourse, employing mathematics. Ashmole's prediction was not simply wishful thinking.

According to Ashmole, the "more famous and pregnant philosophers" (a phrase dripping with Rosicrucian in-reference) would "refine the Arts like tried Gold." The Royal Society saw a significant increase in membership in 1663. Four years later, Newton would begin his alchemical investigations (Starkey had begun his search for the Philosopher's Stone in 1645).

It should also be recalled that a significant part of the reforming program advocated by Andreae, Comenius, and Hartlib—though they did not call that program "Rosicrucian"—was the deliberate fostering of craft and technical knowledge, including architecture. This specificity has been much overlooked in the search for Rosicrucian influence on Freemasonry. The art and science embraced by the master masons of the period was exactly the kind of scenario of interest to technically and mathematically minded Rosicrucians in the period, and master masons would hardly have dismissed a certain flattered feeling on being informed of this latest enrichment to their already grandiose self-image. Furthermore, the master masons' awareness of the cosmos as the work of a divine architect whose temple is a construction of human ingenuity ensured that compliments might travel in both directions.

Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism seem made for one another.

Ashmole and Moray, for example—both having a professional interest in fortifications (as soldiers)—would have seen their associations with the master masons very much in tune with their general scientific and knowledge-reforming (Rosicrucian) interests. (Recall again Master Mason

Nicholas Stone's *Enchiridion of Fortifications*, 1645.) In his *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum* (1652), Ashmole was even quick to repeat alchemist Thomas Norton's assertion that alchemy was much beloved of practicing freemasons. Technical alchemy was inseparable from the language of geometry (the word *projection* is just one example). Newton's own copy of Ashmole's *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum* was much consulted by him as he engaged on his own protracted season of experimental alchemy.

However, this is all circumstantial, and is by no means the same as locating an actual Rosicrucian fraternity at work in London during the period. Frankly, we should not expect one. There had never been an actual fraternity of the Rose Cross, and there is no reason to think one had grown up to fill the vacuum. What we do have is an awareness in some people that those who felt "called" by the Rosicrucian writings should endeavor to work in that spirit, knowing intuitively those similarly called to active and contemplative service.

Engraving by Robert Vaughan from Ashmole's *Theatre of British Chemistry*, 1652. Note the masonically resonant setting as the Hermetic "Father" passes the secrets to his adopted "son" with the injunction "*Accipe donum Dei* . . . " (Accept God's gift . . .), a phrase that may hold a clue to the London Masons' Company "Accepcon," probable origin of "Accepted" Freemasonry.

Nobody knew who was or was not an actual Rosicrucian Brother, since

“members” were enjoined to secrecy on the matter. Some might not be sure whether they were spiritual brothers of the Rose Cross, or not. What if one had been chosen in the spiritual sphere? Only the circumstances of one’s life and interests might or might not confirm such an appointment. Those were the rules, and those rules were, as we shall see, very important. Nevertheless, I think I am now in a position to draw attention to the next-best thing to a Rosicrucian fraternity—an actual conscious attempt to realize the Christian Society designed by Johann Valentin Andreae and supported by Christoph Besold, Johann Arndt, Tobias Adami, Wilhelm von der Wense, and Wilhelm Schickard, among many others—*in London*, shortly after the execution of King Charles I—and the novel—and shocking—establishment of a Christian Republic in Britain.

ANDREAE’S IMAGE OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY IN ENGLAND

I consider it highly likely that we can now locate the outlines of a genuine network of men who attempted, in varying degrees of concert, to generate the kind of seed of change that Hartlib and Comenius had attempted to cultivate in England between 1628 and 1642—an effort thrown into disarray by the outbreak of ruinous civil war.

In 1647, John Hall (1627–1656), a Cambridge graduate, poet, and pamphleteer, translated Andreae’s *Christianae Societatis imago* into English as *A Model of a Christian Society*. Hall was concerned about the kind of religious order that would follow now that the king was held in the custody of parliamentarian forces.

Hall was anti-presbyterian and fully aware of the revolutionary religious prejudices of many of Cromwell’s supporters. He hoped against hope that dignity, learning, spirituality, and moderation would characterize the future religious settlement of England, headed, hopefully, by an enlightened prince.

In 1650, Hall’s translation of Andreae’s work was taken up by one Thomas Henshaw. Thomas Henshaw (1618–1700) was educated at University College, Oxford, studied law at the Middle Temple (as did Ashmole), and would later serve in the French army (as would Moray during Charles II’s exile), returning in 1660 to serve as a gentleman of the Privy Council and

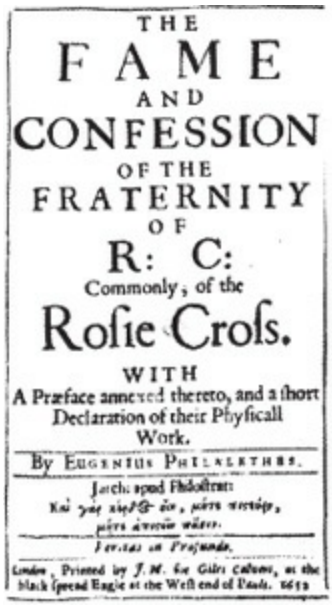
French undersecretary to Charles II (and later for James II and William III). In 1662, Henshaw would become one of the early fellows of the Royal Society.

The following year, 1663 (Ashmole's "significant year"), Henshaw's younger brother, Nathaniel (1628–1673), also joined the Royal Society. Nathaniel Henshaw, M.D., was a physician who trained in Leiden, Holland, and would later practice in Dublin.

Henshaw was a friend of Samuel Hartlib. According to Hartlib, the parents of Thomas and Nathaniel were both "great chymists." According to historian Alan Rudrum, in 1650, Dr. Robert Childe (ca. 1612–1654) informed Hartlib that Henshaw was about to put the *Model of a Christian Society* into practice.[1] The members of the society were to hold all things in common. They would be devoted to religious observance and study, separated from the world, leading austere lives, observing severe diets, and eschewing vain dress. They would "strive to do all the good they can to their neighbourhood." They would also maintain a laboratory. Such ideals were inseparable from contemporary ideas of Rosicrucian activity.

At the same time as this venture was mounted, Dr. Childe was himself trying to establish a "chemical club," with Thomas Henshaw and Thomas Vaughan (1621–1666) as members. One of the club's aims was to gather alchemical manuscripts and publish them in one volume. Such an activity was not only in line with Andreae's Christian Society, but was also accomplished less than two years later by Elias Ashmole, a good friend of both Thomas Vaughan and Dr. Childe.

In May 1650, Vaughan published his *Anthroposophia theomagica*, a publication noted with interest by Samuel Hartlib in his diary (and a work that gave us the now well-known word *anthroposophy*, popularized by Rudolf Steiner). Meanwhile, Vaughan spent that year working intensively on chemistry head-to-head with Thomas Henshaw at a house in Kensington.


THE
FAME
AND
CONFESSION
OF THE
FRATERNITY
OF
R: C:
Commonly, of the
Rosie Crosse.
WITH
A Præface annexed thereto, and a short
Declaration of their Physicall
Work.
By EUGENIUS PHILALETHES.
Jarchi apud Philostratum
Καὶ γὰρ κἀμοὶ ἔστι, μήτε πανσόφῳ,
μήτε ἀνοήτῳ πάσχειν.
Terram in Profundo.
London, Printed by J. M. for Giles Calvert, at the
black Spread Eagle at the West end of Paul. 1652

First English printing of *The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of R:C:*, with a preface by Eugenius Philalethes (Thomas Vaughan); London, Giles Calvert, 1652. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

In 1652, Vaughan would publish, for the first time in English, *The Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross*, with an extensive preface, under the name Eugenius Philalethes. As this work appeared in the same year as Ashmole's alchemical collection, *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum* (begun by the end of 1650), we may suspect a degree of concerted effort in these publications—a peculiarly English wing, as it were, of the German Christian Society. When we add to this collection the first English translation of Henry Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, published in 1651, we have something of a network. Why? For the simple reason that J. Freake's translation of the hermetically inspired text of Agrippa was, in no uncertain terms, dedicated to Dr. Robert Childe.

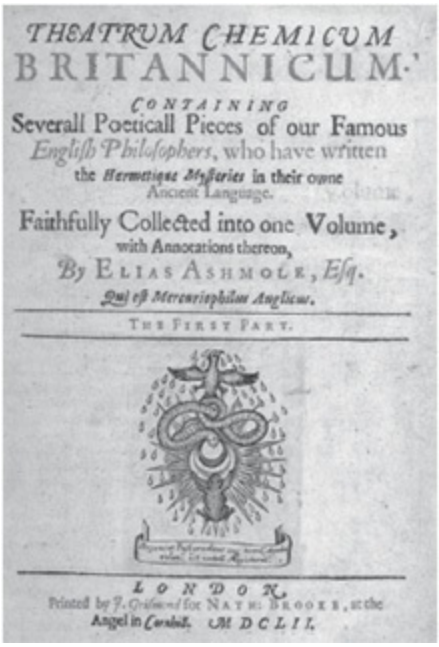
Freake writes of Dr. Robert Childe as follows: "See it is not in vain that you have compassed Sea and Land, for thereby you have made a Proselyte, not of another, but of your self, by being converted from vulgar, and irrational incredulities to the rational embracing of the sublime, Hermeticall, and Theomagicall truths. You are skilled in the one as if Hermes had been your Tutor; have insight in the other, as if Agrippa your Master."

Furthermore, the *Enconium* on the magus Agrippa was penned by Thomas Vaughan. British Rosicrucianism appeared to have been coming out of the

woodwork.

Elias Ashmole's links to the network were ingenious. Free Mason, astrologer, and antiquarian Ashmole first met Doctor Levin Flood—from whom he would obtain alchemical manuscripts—on a visit to Maidstone, introduced by Doctor Childe "the Phisitian" on March 7, 1651. A fortnight later, Ashmole received the grant of an imprimatur for his *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum*, signed by John Booker, since 1643 one of two licensers of mathematical books, and who was himself an astrologer and a friend of Ashmole. Booker also contributed verses to Freake's Agrippa publication, condemning those who failed to see the depth and lasting value of Agrippa's "Occult Philosophy": "They are indeed mysterious, rare and rich, And far transcend the ordinary pitch."

Ashmole, devoted to the works of John Dee, was well in with the significant British figures with an interest in Hermetism. Samuel Hartlib followed Ashmole's emergence with interest. The two men first appear to have corresponded in about 1656. In reply to an inquiry into his current activities, Ashmole stressed the antiquarian side of his engagements.


THEATRUM CHEMICUM
BRITANNICUM.
CONTAINING
Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous
English Philosophers, who have written
the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne
Ancient Language.
Faithfully Collected into one Volume,
with Annotations thereon,
By ELIAS ASHMOLE, Esq.
THE FIRST PART.
LONDON,
Printed by J. Grismond for NATH: BROOKE, at the
Angel in Cornhill. MDCLII.

Elias Ashmole, *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum;* London, Nathaniel Brooke, 1652.

On July 20, 1659, Hartlib wrote to Dr. John Worthington, D.D. (1618–1671), Master of Jesus College, Cambridge: "I hear that Mr Ashmole hath

published the orders of the Rosie Crucians & Adepti. Can you tell me what esteem it bears?" Perhaps Hartlib was confusing Ashmole's alchemical work of the previous year, *The Way to Bliss,* with the anonymous 1656 English translation of Michael Maier's *Themis aurea*. Maier's version of the rules and regulations of the Rose Cross Fraternity, published originally in Frankfurt in 1618, was abstracted from the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis,* the first two so-called Rosicrucian Manifestos.

By a common convention in alchemical and particularly Rosicrucian material, the names of the translators of the *Themis aurea* were only given as initials, T. H. and N. H. I should think that brothers Thomas Henshaw and Nathaniel Henshaw would be the most likely candidates for the task, especially as the text is really an adjunct to Thomas Henshaw's friend Thomas Vaughan's English edition of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*. To my knowledge, nobody has noticed this connection before.

If the identification is correct (and everything points to its being so), Thomas Henshaw not only attempted to form a Christian Society on the design of Andreae in 1650 but also translated Maier's version of the rules of the Rosicrucian Fraternity, published six years later.

The Laws of the Fraternitie R.C. was dedicated to the emergent Ashmole, described not only as "the onely Philosopher in the present age, but as a Golden Candlestick for the holding forth of that *Lucerna Dei* [lamp of God—a favorite Baconian image for the questing soul in search of knowledge] to the sons of men by the light whereof the most reclused Mysteries, both naturall and divine, may in some measure . . . be discovered." This is high praise indeed, and one wonders whether it had been earned purely on the grounds of his having published the *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum* in 1652—a book whose prologue not only praised Michael Maier but also accepted that a brother of the fraternity had at some time been in England and cured the earl of Norfolk of leprosy (as stated in the *Fama*).

Ashmole, it appears, had emerged as a candidate for bringing the Rosicrucian wisdom to light, while others who had a more settled interest in the Rosicrucian Manifestos (such as Hartlib) were perhaps wondering what was going on.

Hall, Henshaw, Vaughan, Childe, Hartlib, Ashmole—these are the names behind the Hermetic blitz of British Rosicrucian publications that punctuated

the 1650s and whose intensity was unique to that decade. Not until the dawn of Theosophy 225 years later would so many core texts of the Rosicrucian and Hermetic tradition be published in Britain in such a short period—a period marked, it should be stressed, by the first and, to date, only appearance of a self-consciously Christian republic in England and Wales. Andreae had drawn an ideal *Respublica Christiana* (Christianopolis) in 1618—a work that had been taken up in England by Sir Francis Bacon in the 1620s (*New Atlantis*, published in 1627), two years before Hartlib left Elbing in Polish Prussia for England.

By the end of the 1650s, a reaction, predictably, set in. "Rosicrucian" would become a word associated with crazy, experimental, republican government, and such was the shock of that reaction to many of its discreet adherents that the word "Rosicrucian" would ever after be muted, consigned to the dangerous world of the occult, esoteric, utopian, or intriguingly mysterious. Politics creates esotericism as surely as theologians create heresies.

Did the Rosicrucians exchange the rose and cross for the square and compasses?

Let us look at that list of names again and investigate more closely what fruit their association reveals. From 1650 to 1652, we have a clear association of the efforts of John Hall, Dr. Robert Childe, Thomas Henshaw, Thomas Vaughan, Elias Ashmole, and Samuel Hartlib. What do they all have in common?

What they have in common was an interest in Hermetic philosophy, spiritual regeneration, and (possibly unbeknownst to most of them) the powerful ideas of Johann Valentin Andreae. Andreae's was the invisible influence behind them all.

In due course, we can add the name of Sir Robert Moray to the network, though he spent much of the 1650s in France with Charles II in exile, and with the court in exile at The Hague of Charles II's aunt Elizabeth of Bohemia.

After 1660, Thomas Vaughan would work as an alchemist, probably as an assistant to Moray, who was known as a patron of the "Rosie Crucians" (not something one would want everyone to know about). Thomas Vaughan's poet brother Henry wrote that his brother gave all his books and manuscripts

to Moray. Moray would, of course, become the first president of the Royal Society. In fact, the first president was meant to be the Honorable Robert Boyle (who discovered Boyle's Law) and who sat on the Royal Society's first council. Boyle (1627–1691) refused the presidency over a "scruple" about taking oaths. Boyle was an evangelical spiritual Christian and, like Andreae, had a horror of oaths, on the basis of Christ's teaching on the subject.

Boyle himself—another associate of Samuel Hartlib—has another intriguing role in our story. It is from him that we first hear the English expression "Invisible College," as a body that may possibly have anticipated the Royal Society. In one of a batch of letters from 1646 to 1647, Boyle asks his former tutor to send him some books, a favor "which will make you extremely welcome to our Invisible College." In another letter to a friend of February 1647, Boyle writes excitedly about his having made the acquaintance of a remarkable group of people:

> The best on't is that the cornerstones of the Invisible or (as they term themselves) the Philosophical College, do now and then honour me with their company . . . men of so capaceous and searching spirits, that school-philosophy is but the lowest region of their knowledge. . . . As they disdain not to be directed to the meanest, so he can but plead reason for his opinion; persons that endeavour to put narrowmindedness out of countenance, by the practice of so extensive a charity that it reaches unto everything called man, and nothing less than an universal good-will can content it. And indeed they are so apprehensive of the want of good employment, that they take the whole body of mankind to their care.[2]

The term *cornerstones* has, of course, Masonic as well as Rosicrucian resonance, but it was a particular favorite of Samuel Hartlib's, who hoped in his *Famous Description* of Macaria, dedicated to the Long Parliament, that it would lay the "cornerstones" of reform in England: a reform, above all, of education and knowledge.

Hartlib's activities were muted after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660; he was too heavily identified with the Cromwellian government and with republicanism. The fruits went to the royalists. Furthermore, the spiritual

aspects of the reform movement were, not surprisingly when one considers the politics, excised from the concerns of the Royal Society, as we saw in our investigation of the work of Comenius. The suppression of the Rosicrucian context has distorted our knowledge of the true history both of the Royal Society and of the Cromwellian period.

"Rosicrucian" had become a dirty word.

ROSICRUCIANS ARE CRAZY

Historian Paul Bembridge, in his essay "Rosicrucian Resurgence at the Court of Cromwell," upset a lot of traditionalist readers of the works of poet and satirist Andrew Marvell (1621–1678) by claiming that Marvell and his employer, retired commander of parliamentarian forces Lord Thomas Fairfax (1612–1671), had been party to a Hermetic-Protestant ideology that attempted to persuade Cromwell's government to establish a hermetically regenerated ideal republic of a holy and Rosicrucian type.[3]

Marvell's famous poem "To His Coy Mistress" was analyzed for Rosicrucian meaning and found guilty as charged. Bembridge revealed that the poem's metaphysical symbolism was based on the Rosicrucian tradition of a vitalized nature involving decoded planetary signatures in the phenomenon of dew (*ros*). Dew was believed to be a secretion of stellar rays, bearing the stamp or signature of higher knowledge within it as a snowflake bears the imprint of a star. The Book of Nature was a divine revelation.

Bembridge's fascinating discussion was used to give substance to the otherwise inexplicable antigovernment propaganda that emerged in 1659 and which, after the Restoration in 1660, would be aimed at the Cromwellian period in general. In short, when satirist Samuel Butler and historian Meric Casaubon attacked the government for being Rosicrucians, Anabaptists, and demented Enthusiasts, they had some cause. There were Rosicrucians at Cromwell's court. According to Bembridge, Marvell was a Rosicrucian and had been close to the government's spin machine, employing astrological symbolism to show Cromwell in a beneficent light. Fairfax, also a poet and writer, was sympathetic to the Hermetic worldview and argued that it was wrong to execute the king.

Bembridge did not agree with the view that Rosicrucians were dangerously

mad, but nonetheless showed why some people thought Rosicrucianism, with its idea of a divinely enlightened republic, was the cause of the breakdown of the country and nearly two decades of protracted misery. For example, in the Restoration comedy *Characters*, by Samuel Butler (1612–1680), we hear how "the Brethren of the Rosy Cross" "bring all Things into Confusion, which among them is the greatest Order."

Butler identified Cromwell's government with that of the brethren, identifying Rosicrucians with republicanism. Butler used the word in a similar style to that of today when opponents of the government refer to the "loony left." Butler was saying that the government had been hijacked by a "cabal of foolish, devilish, utopian enthusiasts." This is all very much in the line of Meric Casaubon's earlier (1659) attack on John Dee and the "illuminati" behind all the problems and horrendous upheavals in the body politic.

In 1659, Casaubon published juicy details of John Dee's angelic communications, which had taken place during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Casaubon's *Strange Relation of What Passed for Some Years Between Dr John Dee and Some Spirits* during the 1580s implied that the civil war was a result of "enthusiasm"—a breakdown of order led by those arrogant and quixotic enough to suppose themselves masters of a new one. Dee and his friends had let devils out of the bag to run loose across the country.

In Butler's *Hudibras* (1662), Hudibras (a Presbyterian) and Ralpho (an Independent) set out to reform society. An astrologer, Sidrophel the Rosy-crucian, is consulted, possibly based on Ashmole's friend, the parliamentarian astrologer William Lilly.

These works explain why it was that when after Ashmole's death in 1692, historian Anthony Wood described him as having been accounted "a great Rosicrucian," Ashmole's acquaintance John Gadbury replied angrily that Ashmole was as far "from fostr'ing such follies" as could be imagined.

Dr. John Dee, depicted on the frontispiece to Meric Casaubon's *True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years Between Dr John Dee and Some Spirits;* London, 1659.

Then there was the work of John Heydon to contend with.

John Heydon (b. 1629) had been imprisoned for two years by Cromwell for predicting the Lord Protector's death by hanging. After the Restoration in 1660, Heydon was imprisoned twice for "treasonable practices." In the 1650s and 1660s Heydon attempted to cash in on the taste for Rosicrucian subjects with works such as *The Voyage to the Land of the Rosicrucians*—which linked Bacon's New Atlantis to the Fraternity R.C.—and *The Holy Guide*.

A doctor who claimed to have had unique access to the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, Heydon claimed himself to be one of their number and published popularized versions of what he considered to be their secrets: a hodgepodge of Paracelsian-style home brews. Ashmole considered him "an Ignoramus and a Cheate." Heydon called himself, after Vaughan perhaps, Eugenius Theodidactus (the noble or well-born teacher of God).

Ashmole asserted that his publication *The Way to Bliss* was used to make Heydon's two works, *The Wise Man's Crown* and the *Rosie-Crucian Physick*, and that in so doing Heydon had "nefariously robb'd and despoiled" the honor of the anonymous author. Keen to have the last word—sales depended on it—John Heydon replied to Ashmole in the preface to *The Idea of the Law* (London, 1660), alleging that it was *his* "three first books" that were by "Elias Ashmole Esq. made publick, imperfect and rudely Deficient, calling it

The way to bliss: In my true copy of which there are four books, all wearing the same title, except the last, which is called, *The Rosie Crucian Axiomata . . .*" This item appeared shortly after *Idea of the Law* in London in 1660.

In case anyone missed the point that Heydon was put out by Ashmole's accusation, Heydon warned: "All Learned men to take heed of *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, published by Elias Ashmole Esq, and such kind of books as these; for the enemy never resteth, but soweth his weeds till a stronger one doth root it out" (a brazen quotation from the *Fama*).

One thing this discussion shows is that historians today should be as wary of throwing around the noun and adjective "Rosicrucian" as propagandists in the past should have been. There were no Rosicrucians anywhere in England in the seventeenth century, if by that we mean actual members of the Fraternity R.C. However, there were a number of wouldbe or self-selecting "virtual" Rosicrucians. We can certainly detect influence from German sources that claim, correctly or otherwise, to be in sympathy with the so-called Rosicrucian manifestos.

With such a messy background to the word "Rosicrucian" as this, it should be no surprise that the official narrative of the genesis of the Royal Society emerges as something that would not upset the most conservative scientific materialist in the Age of Reason; Rosicrucians have no part in it.

Thus, according to Royal Society member John Wallis, writing in 1678 and 1697, the Royal Society grew out of meetings held in London in 1645 in private homes and at Gresham College, London. The meetings included founding members Dr. John Wilkins (later bishop of Chester, but then chaplain to the prince elector Palatine in London), and Theodore Haak, a German from the Palatinate. These men were, like Comenius and Hartlib, patronized by Elizabeth of Bohemia.

According to Wallis, it was Haak "who, I think, gave the first occasion, and first suggested these meetings and many others." According to Thomas Sprat's official history, the Royal Society grew out of meetings held in John Wilkins's rooms at Wadham College, Oxford, between 1648 and 1659. Regular visitors included the polymath Christopher Wren, William Petty, and the famous diarist and botanist John Evelyn. Evelyn described the rooms as having been filled with "many artificial, mathematical and magical curiosities."

Frontispiece, Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* (1667); engraving by Wenceslas Hollar showing Francis Bacon seated to the right. Fame with her trumpet anoints the head of the patron of the society, King Charles II.

John Wilkins, D.D. (1614–1672), warden of Wadham College and chaplain to Elizabeth of Bohemia's son Charles Louis, prince elector of the Palatine, was also the author of a book called *Mathematical Magick* (1648), based on the work of John Dee (*Mathematical Preface*, 1570) and on the mechanical section of Robert Fludd's *Utriusque cosmi historia*. The prince elector would become one of Ashmole's greatest admirers.

Wilkins's *Mathematical Magick* cites the magician-scholar and Hermetic enthusiast Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) as his authority for employing the term *mathematical magick* for that branch of science dealing with mechanical invention. This is a classic Rosicrucian preoccupation of the period. His reference to Agrippa may also mean that Wilkins was familiar with the J. Freake translation of Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* that extolled the virtues of Dr. Robert Childe—or indeed—and conversely—that the translation of Agrippa had been stimulated by Wilkins's reference. Wilkins's citation of Agrippa as an authority was a fairly bold one to appear in an era of regular witch trials; both Agrippa and Dee had been accused of diabolical pacts.

Wilkins's *Mathematical Magick* also gives an example of what he means by "mathematical magick." He refers to an underground lamp, comparing it to the lamp "seen in the sepulchre of Francis Rosicrosse, as is more largely expressed in the Confession of that Fraternity." "Francis" is an error made presumably by misreading a copy of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis;* he takes *fra.*, meaning frater, as "Francis." Neither the *Fama* nor the *Confessio Fraternitatis* was available in English at the time of the first

edition of Wilkins's mathematical book (1648).

That Boyle asserted in his letter quoted above that the "cornerstones" take the whole world for their care suggests the universal reformation ideal of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, as is Boyle's emphasis on a path of love and knowledge. Boyle's charity that "reaches unto everything called man" suggests the pansophic vision endowed in the human microcosm that we find in Fludd, in Comenius, in the works of Pico della Mirandola—and, subsequently, in symbolic Freemasonry.

If there is one man who, in his life and interests, links up all the strands discussed above, it must be Elias Ashmole (for a full treatment, see my biography of Ashmole, *The Magus of Freemasonry*). This book would be incomplete without some treatment of Ashmole's place in the Rosicrucian story.

Engraving of Elias Ashmole by William Fairthorne, 1656.

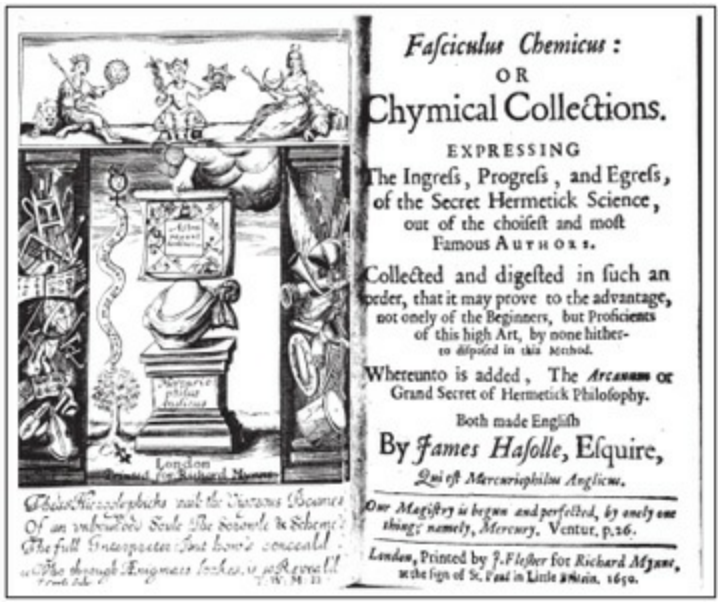
FASCICULUS CHEMICUS

Fasciculus chemicus (An alchemical posy; London, Richard Mynne, 1650) was the first appearance—or disappearance—of Elias Ashmole in print. The book's frontispiece showed his face obscured by his natal scheme. He also obscured his name. The book was apparently authored by one "James Hasolle," an anagram of Elias Ashmole. The partial pseudonym may have been observed as an alchemical convention. In this case, the name was

doubly pseudonymous. While “James Hasolle” contained Elias Ashmole, *Fasciculus chemicus* was the work of Arthur Dee (1579–1651), the son of Dr. John Dee (1524–1608), the famous Elizabethan astrologer and court scientist.

Ashmole wrote the introduction and translated Arthur Dee’s work, thinking the latter dead. On discovering Dee had only been abroad in Moscow—as the much respected physician to the czar (recommended by King James I)—Ashmole wrote to him requesting permission to publish. Arthur Dee, now residing in Norwich, agreed to the publication.

Fasciculus chemicus contained Ashmole’s observation that in all alchemical writings, “the Golden Thread of the Matter is so warily disposed, covertly concealed, and so broken off and disperst,” that even “the best principled student” will not find “its scattered ends,” “unless the Father of Illuminations prompt, or lend an Angels hand to guide.” This illumination is “a Haven towards which many skilful Pilots have bent their course, yet few have reached it”; “Many are called, but few are chosen.”


Fasciculus Chemicus:
OR
Chymical Collections.
EXPRESSING
The Ingreſs, Progreſs, and Egreſs, of the Secret Hermetick Science, out of the choiſeſt and moſt Famous AUTHORS.
Collected and digeſted in ſuch an order, that it may prove to the advantage, not onely of the Beginners, but Proficients of this high Art, by none hitherto diſpoſed in this Method.
Whereunto is added, The *Arcanum* or Grand Secret of Hermetick Philoſophy.
Both made Engliſh
By *James Haſolle*, Eſquire,
Qui eſt Mercuriophilus Anglicus.
Our Magiſtery is begun and perfected, by onely one thing: namely, Mercury. Ventur. p. 26.
London, Printed by *J. Flesher* for *Richard Mynne*, at the ſign of St. Paul in Little Britain. 1650.

“James Hasolle” (Elias Ashmole), *Fasciculus chemicus* (An alchemical posy); London, Richard Mynne, 1650.

The few who are by divine grace chosen to be the “Adepted Priests” “celebrating the ceremonies of so divine a Miracle” will be conspicuous for “a most virtuous life”; “being so qualified, they straightaway lay aside ambitious thoughts, and take up a retiredness; they dwell within their Root; and never care for flourishing upon the Stage of the World.” No “corrupt or

sinister thoughts can grow up in them," as the possession of the secret, which God will never suffer "to be revealed to any but those that can tell how to conceal a secret," will free them from "the root of all evil," namely, covetousness. These words could apply to descriptions of the genuine Rosicrucian Brother from Ashmole's time to our own.

On May 20, 1650, Ashmole consulted the stars to answer the question: "Whether I shall ever have the Philosopher Stone, or whether the matter and fire I think of be true." He sought guidance not from Harry Potter but from William Backhouse (1593–1662), a learned devotee of the Continental Rosicrucian movement and the possessor of a fine alchemical collection, which Ashmole freely consulted.

On April 3, 1651, at half past midnight, "Mr : Will : Backhouse of Swallowfield in Com. Berks, caused me to call him Father thence forward." This was an example of the "Hermetic adoption" discussed by Ashmole himself in the pages of his *Theatrum*.[4] The relationship of "father" to "son" may well imitate the traditional relationship between the master Hermes Trismegistus and his pupils, Asclepius, Tat, and Ammon.

What do we know of this Backhouse who chose Elias Ashmole to be his spiritual son and heir, and whom the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* describes unequivocally as a Rosicrucian?

William Backhouse (1593–1662) was a younger son of Samuel Backhouse, Esq., of Swallowfield Park in Berkshire. He entered Christ Church, Oxford, as a commoner in 1610, at the age of seventeen. Leaving without a degree (as was not uncommon for gentlemen in those days), he devoted his time to occult studies and became a renowned alchemist, Rosicrucian, and astrologer. He was also a collector of mechanical marvels. He invented the "Way wiser," a kind of pedometer attached to a coach, by whose means distance traveled could be computed.

Engraving of Hermes Trismegistus, from *The Divine Pymander,* translated by Dr. Everard; London, Thomas Brewster and Gregory Moule, 1650. (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

When Backhouse's eldest brother, Sir John Backhouse, K.B., died on October 9, 1649, aged sixty-six, Backhouse inherited what Samuel Hartlib described as "one of the best Thermometers or Weather-glasses which also K. Charles saw and was mightily pleased with it. Hee hath also a long Gallery wherein are all manner of Inventions and Rarities."[5] We see Backhouse here firmly in the tradition of technical, inventive interest that characterized Andreae and some of his closest friends and associates.

According to Hartlib's *Ephemerides*, the ever-inquisitive Prussian asked William Petty about Backhouse.[6] (Petty was, of course, a regular visitor to John Wilkins's rooms at Wadham College, Oxford.) In his reply to Hartlib, Petty described Backhouse as "an Elixir man." Did this designation for an alchemist engaged in processes to manufacture elixirs bear any pejorative meaning? I doubt it. It probably meant simply that Backhouse was dedicated to the alchemical production of pharmacological products, a quite proper activity for a Rosicrucian. According to the *Fama*, a brother of the fraternity

was strictly enjoined to cure the sick *gratis*.

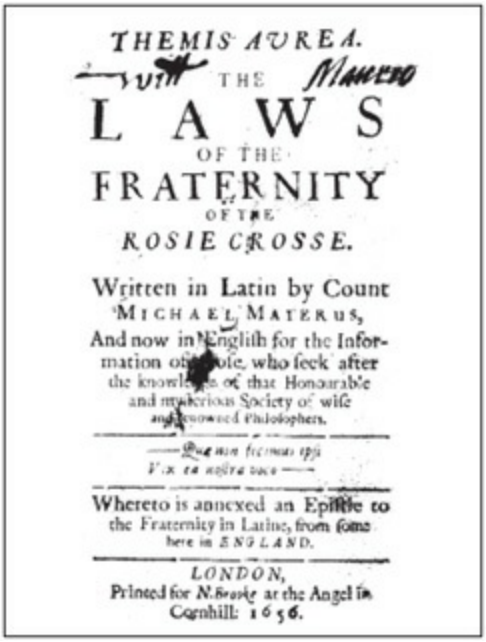
Ashmole's company at the time included a number of doctors, and a Paracelsian physician was one for whom astrology, as well as alchemy, was indispensable. The pharmacologically potent elixir was regarded as a by-product of the Great Work of producing the "golden medicine" (which could cure everything), itself a by-product of producing the "Philosopher's Stone" (which could transform base metals to gold through a "marriage" of soul and spirit). Longevity, health, and holiness were all bound up together; the priest of the body needed to be a doctor of the soul.

Elixirs could be produced for a variety of diseases and ailments. Diseases being linked to "humours" (affected by the stars), their cure could be assisted by attention to the positions of the planets within the zodiacal trigons at particular times of manufacture, combined with the specific "virtues" of plants and chemically mutated substances.

Ashmole was obviously attentive to any possibility of acquiring authentic knowledge of the Fraternity R.C., for it is from about this time that we find a note, written mostly in cipher, from Ashmole's Bodleian papers, offering this surprising snippet: "The Fratres RC : live about Strasburg : 7 miles from thence in a mon[a]st[e]ry." The name "Doctor Molton" is written in the margin of the manuscript, a little above the note, so one may think this snippet came from this (unknown) person. The top of the page is inscribed "Notes out of Dr. Child's book." Clearly Ashmole had not wasted his trip to Maidstone with "Doctor Child the Phisitian" in March 1651.

Ashmole almost certainly believed that the Fraternity of the Rose Cross actually existed in some form or other. In the Bodleian Library's Ashmole manuscript collection, there exists, appended to a handwritten copy of the *Fama Fraternitatis*, a fervent petition to "the most illuminated Brothers of the Rose Cross" that he, Elias Ashmole, might be admitted to their fraternity.[7] (The original English translation from which the copy of the *Fama* was taken lies elsewhere in Ashmole's papers.[8]) W. H. Black's Catalogue of the Ashmole Manuscripts (1845) notes that the original was "written in an early 17th century hand," "certainly not later than the reign of Charles I."[9] The original copy of the *Fama* is different from what Vaughan published in 1652, and may have been in the possession of Backhouse.

Frances Yates believed Ashmole's Latin address, headed *Fratribus Rosae Crucis Illuminatissimis,* was an entirely private "pious exercise," a prayer. He was aware that the convention for approaching the fraternity was to understand that the Brothers of the Rose Cross could detect the true will of the aspirant without themselves seeing any written petition. Unfortunately, we do not know for sure the date of this petition, but it would seem to belong to the early 1650s, and it would be reasonable to suggest that Backhouse encouraged the petition. Ashmole must certainly have been aware that the *Mercuriophilus Anglicus* (or "English mercurylover," as he called himself) was moving in the right circles.



THEMIS AUREA.

THE LAWS OF THE FRATERNITY OF THE ROSIE CROSSE.

Written in Latin by Count MICHAEL MATERUS,

And now in English for the Information of those who seek after the knowledge of that Honourable and mysterious Society of wise and renowned Philosophers.

Whereto is annexed an Epistle to the Fraternity in Latine, from some here in ENGLAND.

LONDON, Printed for N. Brooke at the Angel in Cornhill: 1656.

The Laws of the Fraternity of the Rosie Crosse (translation of Michael Maier's *Themis aurea;* Frankfurt, L. Jennis, 1618), together with an epistle addressed to the fraternity "from some here in England"; London, Nathaniel Brooke, 1656. Brooke was publisher of Ashmole's *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum.*

On January 26, 1652, Ashmole recorded how "the first of my Theat: Chem: Brit: was sold to the Earle of Pembroke." Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who maintained interests in alchemy and kindred traditions, was also president of the council of state. Was Pembroke another example of so-called Rosicrucians at Cromwell's court? Pembroke could hardly have had the time for Ashmole's idea of alchemy, for as Ashmole would write in *The Way to Bliss* (preface, 1658): "She" (Hermetic philosophy, or Wisdom) requires "a serene Minde, quiet Thoughts, unwearied Endeavours, indeed the

whole Man."

On March 10, 1652, Ashmole recorded how "this morning my Father Backhouse opened himselfe very freely, touching the great Secret." As if catching the whiff of something interesting going on, Ashmole received a notable visit at 11 a.m., June 14, 1652, when "Doctor Wilkins and Mr Wren came to visit me at Blackfriars. This was the first tyme I saw the Doctor"—but not the last, presumably. Both men were, of course, active members of the core group that, according to Sprat's official history, went on to form the Royal Society.

Dr. Wilkins we have met before. Mr. Wren was, of course, Christopher Wren (1631–1723), whose chief interests were biology and optics. At this time, Wren was a commoner of Wadham, of which college Wilkins was warden. Royalists Ashmole and Wren would enjoy a long friendship, sealed by their common interests in science and in the Order of the Garter.

Ashmole's reputation as a walking encyclopedia and man to be consulted and respected grew tremendously quickly after publication of the *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum.* In 1653, Richard Sanders dedicated his book *Physiognomie, and Chiromancie, Metoposcopie, the Symmetrical Proportions of Signal Moles of the Body &c.* to "the Truly and Vertuously Noble Universally Learned Mycaenas (My Much Honoured Friend) Elias Ashmole Esquire." The letter of dedication praises Ashmole as "a real mercurial Encyclopaedia." Mycaenas was an ancient collector.

Timothy and John Gadbury's *Astronomicall Tables First Invented by George Hartgill* (London 1656) was also addressed to Elias Ashmole, commending him, in a phrase redolent of Free Masonry, "to the safeguard of the Great Architect of Heaven and Earth."

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE REVEALED

On May 13, 1653, Ashmole at last became privy to the Great Secret: "My father Backhouse lying sick in Fleetestreete over against St: Dunstans Church, and not knowing whether he should live or dye, about eleven a clock, told me in Silables the True Matter of the Philosophers Stone : which he bequeathed to me as a Legacy."

A clue to understanding what Ashmole meant when he referred to

“silables” may lie in an anonymous seventeenth- or early-eighteenthcentury manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.[10] A chapter on “*sillabes Chimiques*” concerns certain syllables derived from seven hieroglyphic signs placed at the start of the chapter to form “*un mot significatif ou un caractère universel*”: a significant word or a universal character.

I should like to suggest that the seven hieroglyphic signs referred to in the manuscript that form a significant word, or a universal character, may very well be signs for the seven letters *V-I-T-R-I-O-L,* which abbreviate the alchemical injunction *Visita interiora terrae, rectificando invenies occultam lapidem:* “Visit the center of the earth and by rectifying you will find the hidden stone.” *VITRIOL* is the significant word; the universal character would be the letter tau: *T* in a circle, the sign of vitriol. Vitriol is the green salt from which an alchemical process may begin. Paracelsus called the vitriolic salt the *Signat-stern:* the signal star.

Something of the sort seems to have been conveyed to Ashmole, though we have no record at all of whether he ever found the time or means to apply the knowledge. Ashmole said in his preface to *The Way to Bliss* that a series of vexatious lawsuits (including threats to his life) had severely curtailed his alchemical studies and projected publications.

The provision in Ashmole’s great Musaeum Ashmoleanum for a chemical laboratory may perhaps have been intended as a place where, at some stage, he might have wished to put his knowledge into practice. The institution’s employee, Dr. Robert Plot, chemist and author of *The Natural History of Staffordshire,* who ran the building, later used the laboratory for making remedies from which he profited. Such profitability may have been an intended by-product of the establishment, a justification on good Royal Society lines. Science was justified by generating useful—that is, profitable—knowledge. Improvement to trades (such as pharmaceuticals) was laid out as part of the founding purpose of the Royal Society. If Ashmole truly saw himself as a Rosicrucian Brother, he would certainly not have wished to profit personally from such knowledge. Plot, presumably, was of a different opinion.

THE WAY TO BLISS

On April 16, 1658, five years after receiving the great secret, Ashmole finished writing the preface to the alchemical text *The Way to Bliss,* also received from William Backhouse. The publication included suspected heretic Doctor Everard's transcript and notes. John Everard, D.D. (ca. 1575–ca. 1650) made the first printed English translation of *The Divine Pymander,* published in 1650. The *Pymander* contained the first four books of the *Corpus Hermeticum,* anciently attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. This was a key text in the 1650s Hermetic book blitz. Hermes was an ancient "patron" of the freemasons, along with Euclid and Pythagoras, and a "star" of Andreae's *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz*, responsible for the "Elixir of Life."

The purpose of *The Way to Bliss* was, Ashmole declared, nothing less than "to prove the Possibility of such a thing as the Philosopher's Stone."

Fascinating ilustration from Henry Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (London, Moule, 1651), translated by J. Freake and dedicated to Dr. Robert Childe. Note the plumbline at the figure's solar plexus, and the feet placed at right angles on the stone, forming a square; symbolic Free Masonry is strongly implied.

POOR ROBIN'S INTELLIGENCE

These are to give notice, that the Modern Green-ribbon'd Caball, together with the Ancient Brother-hood of the Rosy-Cross; the Hermetick Adepti and the Company of Accepted Masons, intend all to dine together on the 31st November next, at the Flying-Bull in Windmill-Crown-Street.[11]

The above notice appeared in a humorous paper called *Poor Robin's Intelligence* in 1676. It is notable because its author saw fit to join the "Hermetic Adepti" up to the "Ancient Brother-hood of the Rosy-Cross" and, most notably, to the "Company of Accepted Masons."

"All idle people" who could spare time from frequenting the coffeehouse were encouraged by the comic advertisement to attend. However, they would need "to provide themselves Spectacles of Malleable Glass; for otherwise "'tis thought the said Societies will (as hitherto) make their Appearance Invisible."

This burlesque (note the date: November 31!) appeared in 1676 in a sheet dedicated to satirical imitations of current advertisements and notices.

Was this just a resurgence of the mud thrown at the name of the Rose Cross for political reasons at the beginning of the previous decade?

In fact, the aim may have been to lampoon a discreet association of Whigs who opposed the increasing power of the monarch and his closest advisers. There may have been a sniff of republicanism again.

Charles II's five closest advisers had, in popular parlance, been nicknamed "the Cabal." The name came from an acrostic of the advisors' names: Lord Clifford of Chudleigh; Anthony Ashley, first Earl of Shaftesbury; George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham; Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington; and John Maitland, first Duke of Lauderdale.

The word *cabal* suggested secrecy, skullduggery, covert operations, and mystification (the mystical Cabala) as well as wickedness (*cabal* is another word for coven). A number of those who opposed the king's policies of alliance with France (and tolerance of Roman Catholicism), along with neglect of parliamentary will, wore a green ribbon and were in favor of the Whig faction in parliament.

The lampoon therefore seems to be concerned with identifying the *invisibility* of the government's opposition ("a green-ribbon'd Cabal") with the mysterious "cabals" associated with Rosicrucian enthusiasts, Hermetic philosophers, and, remarkably, "the Company of Accepted Masons." Perhaps the advertisement was saying that the opposition was so invisible (and unrealistic) as to be of no use. You would need special glasses to see it!

We will never be sure of exactly where the joke lay for the writer of the

advertisement, but it is plain that the Company of Accepted Masons was not the same in the writer's mind as the London Company of Masons, the controlling body of the building and architectural trade (architects were called master masons).

In her book *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment,* Frances Yates remarked on the precision of the lampoon's association. Whoever wrote the advertisement, ludicrous as it was, she observed, seems to have known a lot about esoteric circles in London. How well known was it in London that during the "Rosicrucian Scare" in Paris in 1623, placards had appeared declaring an imminent visit from the Invisibles of the Rosicrucian Fraternity? This old joke (invisibility) was based on the injunction in the first Rosicrucian manifestos that a brother of the order should not be recognized as such when traveling. By the time the enemies of the movement had finished with this innocent directive, the Rosicrucians had become witches, supernaturally attending Satan's Sabbaths and perverting the innocent everywhere.

Jamsthaler, *Viatorium spagyricum,* 1625: Alchemical Sol and Luna conjoined by Mercury into the hermaphroditic Rebis, carrying square and compasses, symbolizing spiritual polarities in creative harmony, while receiving the powers of the known planets.

The word "Rosicrucian" does not appear to have had this negative tinge when the first news of the fictitious Rosicrucian (or Rose Cross) Fraternity arrived in England in the second decade of the seventeenth century. Then, it was the preserve of a small number of men, men like Paracelsian Dr. Robert

Fludd, whose *Tractatus apologeticus integritatem Societatis de Rosea Cruce* (Apologetic tract on the integrity of the Rosicrucian Society; Leiden, 1617) linked the brotherhood to those who would build a spiritual house "not made with hands" (Mark 14:55–58; 2 Cor. 5:1f).

This spiritual conception of the Rosicrucian fraternity seems to have survived into the eighteenth century in a quite unexpected form.

ROBERT SAMBER AND A LOST ROSICRUCIAN FREE MASONRY

We do not hear any more of any link between Free and Accepted Masonry and Rosicrucian-type ideals until the period in which the grand lodge was born.

This little message to history comes from a man who had read and been much inspired by Thomas Vaughan's *Lumen de lumine* [Light from Light]: *Or a New Magicall Light Discovered,* containing *A Letter from the Brothers of R.C. Concerning the Invisible, Magical Mountain, and the Treasure Therein Contained* (H. Blunden, London, 1651).

This work, along with those of Fludd, would inspire this early eighteenth-century Freemason. So inspired was he, in fact, that he believed its vision of spiritual transformation held London's Grand Lodge up to damning account by sheer contrast. Obviously believing that Accepted Free Masonry was founded upon a profound spiritual ideal, this man believed that Accepted Free Masonry was losing contact with its roots.

According to a newspaper report published in 1723 (the year of the first *Book of Constitutions of Free and Accepted Masonry*), Robert Samber, a prolific translator, attended the raucous celebration dinner, held at a London inn, for the newly elected Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons, Philip, Duke of Wharton (a notorious Jacobite).

Samber was not very impressed by what he witnessed at the celebration dinner. How, he asked, "demolishing huge Walls of Venison Pastry . . . after a very disedifying Manner" contributed to "building up a Spiritual House," he did not know. The reference to the "Spiritual House" seals Samber's acknowledged identity with Eugenius Philalethes Junior, who translated a French book on longevity known as *Long Livers: A Curious History of Such*

Persons of Both Sexes Who Have Liv' d Several Ages, and Grown Young Again (1722).

Samber regarded himself, then, as the "junior" of Eugenius Philalethes—that is, Thomas Vaughan—whose *Lumen de lumine*, published seventy years before, echoed Robert Fludd's view that the man who stood on the cornerstone of Christ should be a builder of the spiritual house. The Rosicrucian House of the Holy Spirit was thus definitely linked to the great work of divine architecture: the hidden temple of the spiritually regenerated Man.

Eugenius Philalethes Junior's translation of De Longeville Harcouet's book gave Samber the opportunity to pen a "Dedicatory Letter" from a "Brother" mason to "the Grand Master, Masters, Wardens and Brethren" of the Freemasons of Great Britain and Ireland, who "are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood" (a reference to the Melchizedek tradition applied to Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews, later employed on the Continent in neo-Rosicrucianist orders).

Samber claims Freemasonry represents "an uninterrupted Tradition": "Ye are living stones, built up a spiritual House, who believe and rely on the chief *Lapis Angularis* [cornerstone], which the refractory and disobedient Builders disallowed." This is a reference to the Gospels' "stone the builders rejected" that has become "the cornerstone of the temple." For Samber, the symbolism of Accepted Freemasonry is emphatically of a spiritual and mystical Christianity. The stone the builders rejected was Christ, whom the builders failed to recognize. These "new masons" gorging themselves silly in London seem to be failing to recognize Him also.

Freemasons are "a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood," as well as "imprisoned . . . exiled Children" and "sons of Science . . . who are illuminated with the sublimest Mysteries and profoundest secrets."

Samber describes God as "the Centre of all Things, yet knows no Circumference."

He refers to several levels of masonic understanding. He alludes to "those of you who are not far illuminated . . . and are not worthy to look behind the Veil," contrasting them with "those who are so happy as to have greater Light" who "will discover under these Shadows somewhat truly great and noble, and worthy the serious Attention of a Genius the most elevated and

sublime."

Samber refers not only to the "Arcane disciplines" of the early Christians (the "cubic stone" of the Book of Revelation) but also to alchemy, to the Paracelsian tripartite distinction of principles of salt (body), sulfur (soul), and mercury (spirit). Clearly, for Samber, the mercurial, or third, level (Ashmole called himself the Mercuriophilus Anglicus) was for those who had seen beyond "the Veil." He says he is addressing "a higher class who are but few."

Samber is well acquainted with the Renaissance idea, familiar to Pico della Mirandola, that there had always been a doctrine of Unity, vouchsafed by a continual brotherhood from Moses through the schools of the prophets and the rabbis (a theme in Sperber's pro-Rosicrucian *Echo of the God-enlightened Fraternity,* one that will be echoed a century later in the work of Fabre d'Olivet; see chapter 16).

Samber regards Christ as the reorganizer of a masonic brotherhood, along with "holy brother St Paul." This is a theme that would be taken up later in the century with the development of Christian Masonry in the Rectified Scottish Rite and in the so-called Ancient and Accepted Rite.

In a recent book, *William Stukeley: Science, Religion and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell & Brewer, Inc., 2002), David Boyd Haycock has drawn attention to an 1892 reprint of the preface to *Long Livers*. According to Haycock, masonic historian R. F. Gould "noted previous speculations on the book's bearing to the history of Freemasonry, referring to its possible relationship with the obscure seventeenth-century Protestant order of Rosicrucianism."

Haycock continues: "A letter published in the *Freemason* [magazine] on April 16, 1887, reflected that 'during the decade from 1720 to 1730, a kind of Rosicrucian or Hermetic influence must have taken place in the Lodges of London, and there are indeed some things in the ritual and terminology of Masonry after 1730 that cannot be derived at all from Operative Lodges, but are taken from the works of Rosicrucians and Cabbalists.'"

Gould suggested that it was possible that some high-ranking masons were members of another Hermetic society, and it was to these that Philalethes' work applied. It seems more likely to this author that Samber's insight represented a survival of an older representation of the spiritual essence of the craft, as Samber himself suggests. If any "high ranking Masons were

members of another Hermetic Society" between 1720 and 1730, the society was that associated with the meaning of "Accepted" Freemasonry. In terms of ideology, it is practically impossible to separate this meaning (as Samber, at any rate, perceives it) from dominant themes in what will later be called Rosicrucianism, but that at the time were simply regarded as the province either of an invisible Fraternity R.C. or of bodies that venerated the writings made in that fraternity's name.

In short, it is difficult, if not impossible, to regard early-eighteenth-century symbolic Freemasonry as having been possible without a Rosicrucian movement before it.

In terms of the Grand Lodge's novel Constitutions of 1723, Rosicrucianism by name is conspicuous by its absence; the fraternity's dubious name more than accounts for this. Furthermore, senior British Freemason Jean Théophile des Aguliers (present at the Samber dinner) was an enormously devoted follower of fellow Royal Society member Sir Isaac Newton. Newton had studied the Rosicrucian story with interest, while recognizing it as an "imposture." Though the word *imposture* may merely indicate a "game" (as Frances Yates observed)—an astute conclusion—the pejorative implications of the word (and its associations with political disturbance as well as quackery) would definitely persuade one such as Des Aguliers (who had a significant hand in the production of the Constitutions) from linking it directly to what was, in fact, a new order. The new order would proceed very soon to agglomerate preexisting lodges of Freemasons (see my book *Freemasonry: The Reality*) on the basis that it was the oldest order known to man—a claim previously monopolized by Rosicrucians!

Plaque recording the site of the former headquarters of the London Masons' Company, Masons' Yard, Basinghall Street, London, where Ashmole attended a function from which

emerged “new-accepted” Masons in March 1682.

CONCLUSION

Accepted Free Masonry was clearly an infra-trade phenomenon in the seventeenth century; it ran side by side with the industry. Whether it also included material of a Rosicrucian type within its operating principles or structures, we simply cannot say. Much evidence from the period has been destroyed or lost; the secrets were well kept.

Nor can we be as confident as Buhle was in ascribing a transformative role to Dr. Robert Fludd. If we had comprehensive lists of Accepted Free Masons before 1682 (our largest list, thanks to Ashmole), we should have a far better idea of who and what was involved. Records of “Acceptions” exist for only 1638 (a late date in terms of original Rosicrucian history) and 1682. Those lists are dominated by the most senior master masons of the London Masons’ Company. That does not mean that such persons constituted the largest number of Acceptions made nor gives us reason to conclude that the idea of Acception was itself born out of the company alone.

Was Samber right in his demand that the Grand Lodge look to its genuine (as he saw them) antecedents? What reason could he have had for lying? Had he been misinformed? I do not know, but it is highly significant, I think, that Samber was writing at precisely the time that a new order of Freemasonry was establishing itself over an earlier system. It is usually in the interests of new regimes to distinguish themselves from what they have acquired. The essence of the new order was expressed as Harmony, a nice Renaissance concept, but cleverly associated in this instance with the harmonies of the universe and the recently established Hanoverian dynasty, secured by the Whig Party at the expense of the Stuarts and their Jacobite supporters. The Whigs would not have liked anyone comparing them to the “Rosicrucian maniacs” who had brought about (it was believed) national chaos the last time a Stuart monarchy was deposed. The new Grand Lodge Freemasonry was calm, rational, and practically all-inclusive—not a prophet in sight.

Whether Samber the “chosen priest” was right or not, one thing is clear. His vision of a Free Masonry inspired by the seventeenth-century Rosicrucian movement would, in a short space of time, find a very large

number of adherents on the Continent, where Rosicrucianism had made the greatest cultural penetration a century before.

It may or may not be the case that Rosicrucianism came to England, returned to Europe as Freemasonry, only to become “Rosicrucianized” on its return.

That Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism were somehow made for each other is clear enough; whether either was made *by* one or the other cannot be said with certainty. One transformative process, however, *is* certain. What Rosicrucianism lacked in *structure* in the seventeenth century was more than made up for by Freemasonry in the eighteenth. And what fellowships of Free and Accepted Masons *may* have lacked in ideology in the seventeenth century was undoubtedly made up for by Rosicrucianism in the eighteenth.

The dividers and set square placed together in vertical, complementary reverse may be seen as an abstraction of the rose and the cross: an interpenetrating union of two worlds into a higher reality. The cross is made of two squares; the rose is circular with a mystical center. Lines and squares represent linear, earthly movements and constructions. Circular projections (made by the compasses) represent heavenly or celestial movements. The square is to the masculine side of the hermaphroditic *rebis* what the compasses are to the feminine side of the *rebis*. Likewise, the rose, circular with a center, represents the blossom of the cross, the spiritual life on Earth sustained from above.

Every scrap of ideology or philosophic principle that might be diligently extracted from James Anderson’s two books of masonic Constitutions (1723 and 1738)—save Anderson’s weak handling of the principle of reason—could have been taken from the writings and influence of the greatest unsung hero of European thought, Johann Valentin Andreae, a giant among men who preferred to keep out of the limelight.

THIRTEEN

THE REVENGE OF THE *CURIOSI*

Would that the remaining chimes and little bells by which this fable was noised abroad be melted down; I mean that I wish their prolific writings would all go up in smoke.

JOHANN VALENTIN ANDREAE, *DE CURIOSITATIS PERNICIE SYNTAGMA AD SINGULARITATIS STUDIOSOS*

Should readers be experiencing a degree of confusion at this point in our story, please be assured that this is no sign of intellectual failure. The confusion is built into the very fabric of the story and is, regrettably, unavoidable. Andreae himself spoke of the situation after the publication of the so-called Rosicrucian manifestos as nothing less than a Turris Babel—and the Tower of Babel represents the ultimate confusion and dispersion of sense: a veritable divine judgment on the folly and hubris of God's creature, the human being.

WHAT IS A ROSICRUCIAN?

We have seen multiple usage of the word "Rosicrucian." In the last chapter we saw how "Rosicrucian" could mean social revolutionary or utopian hothead in England, while, conversely, the same word could indicate one dedicated to the spiritual truths of alchemical adeptship. The word could indicate private wisdom or public insanity: advanced social and political thinking or obscurantist occult deviance. It could mean science or magick, or something in between.

Would the *real* Rosicrucians stand up? No, because there weren't any.

The Rosicrucian Brotherhood was a fiction; there were no real Rosicrucians. Anyone who claimed to be, or inwardly thought he or she was a Rosicrucian, was deluded, or confused, or misinformed, or scurrilous, or naive, or just plain stupid. There was nothing to join. The real brotherhood did not answer letters because it did not exist. The writers were simply writing to themselves.

But were not the *true* Rosicrucians *invisible*?

Insofar as they did not exist, certainly.

But was there not an idea, or collection of ideas, one could call "Rosicrucian," and "Rosicrucian" then could be a name one could give to those (or be taken by those) who shared such ideas?

What ideas?

Comenius's or Sperber's? Andreae's or Phillip Ziegler's? Maier's or von Franckenberg's? Ashmole's or Faulhaber's? Eglin's or Hess's? Fludd's or Bureus's? Descartes's or Morsius's? Giorgi's or Postel's? Bruno's or Dee's? Schwenckfeld's or Studion's? The Gnostics' or St. Augustine's? Plato's or Pico della Mirandola's? The Bible's or Hermes'?

But had not the Invisibles created something real, active, and traceable?

Where?

In Tübingen? In London? In Danzig? In Paris?

In the mind, perhaps?

Is it possible to arrive at a definition of the word "Rosicrucian" to help us trace its development?

What development?

It is arguable that Rosicrucian movements repeat themselves throughout history; there is precious little development, mostly repetition, and, often, greater obscurity. This is a characteristic not of science or art, but of sectarian religion.

So, you see, we have every right to be confused. Perhaps we need to take a leaf out of Christoph Besold's book. Besold believed that human beings should strive for the "most simple simplicity" and quoted St. Augustine, "I was searching for you outside of myself, and did not find the God in my

heart.”

I may be alone in believing that one of the most significant events to have occurred after the first eight years of the Rosicrucian furor was the decision of Andreae’s close friend Christoph Besold to convert from the Lutheran to the Roman Catholic faith. Indeed, I think the event, which took place in 1622, was seminal.

Sure, Andreae himself believed that Besold knew too much of the facts concerning the Roman Church for the conversion to have carried any real conviction. “A longtime wanderer got carried away by the wind” was Andreae’s view of the conversion—a phrase oddly reminiscent, to my mind, of the title of a book that described how Anglican John Keble watched with dismay as fellow Anglican John Henry Newman went over to Rome in 1845: *The Parting of Friends*. In some respects, I suspect that Besold’s conversion presaged the essence of Newman’s conversion by 220 years: typical of the Germans to be so far ahead!

No one who has read of the intense mystical Christianity of Besold can fail to understand something of his thinking; one might, however, be astonished at its timing. In 1622, the Thirty Years’ War (no one knew it would last that long, of course) had been raging for some two years. It was a war between Catholics and Protestants—or rather, Catholic states against Protestant states. Catholics killed Protestants because they were Protestants and Protestants killed Catholics because they were Catholics. Sometimes they killed their own.

“Love one another,” said Christ to his followers. “Ah!” said the followers, “but *they* are not of *us*! Think not, O Lord, that we do this for ourselves; we do this *for you! We* are the true Christians!”

It was difficult for critics outside of the Catholic communion to see Catholic authority as anything but a ferocious machine of political and religious oppression. In its name, men, women, and children were being evicted, harassed, and slaughtered. Men of learning who failed to toe the line faced inquisition and fire. Time after time, the church rubberstamped the political objectives of the Hapsburgs.

How, then, could a highly intelligent and profoundly well-informed Lutheran, whose own homeland was threatened by Catholic armies, convert?

Besold shared with Andreae the knowledge that the Reformation had failed to reform the whole church, or even the hearts of most of those who declared allegiance to the "reformed" confessions.

In Germany, every "caesar" (Kaiser) or state sovereign who had rejected Rome was also that state's "pope." This was a system of caesaro-papism that oppressed the simple followers of Christ, according to Andreae.

The Christian Church had fallen into the hands of the state. What kind of Christianity you got depended largely on the will of the sovereign. There was one law for the rich and one for the poor, while the sovereign was a law unto himself. In England, in 1649, Charles I would never have been executed but for the fact that the Reformation had given members of parliament the impression that they had the right to make religious judgments.

Reformed churches were also state churches and oppressed protesting Christians who failed to fit in: Schwenckfeldians, followers of Weigel, Paracelsus, Franck, Böhme, Anabaptists. Those dubbed heretics by Rome persecuted their own heretics. Besold believed the world was a sect, cut off from God; worldly churches had no right to make religious judgments.

Then, I suppose, Besold looked at what Andreae had tried to do. He looked at Hess and his merits. He looked at the Rosicrucian furor—what a cavalcade of confusion! If this is what happened when you tried to arouse genuine spirituality in the German lands, when you wished with all sincerity to launch a second reformation of the heart and intellect, then, I think Besold foresaw, the Protestant revolt had no more future than more of what was happening around him: regiments of bannerwaving cavalry and infantry heading for the fields of blood—not in the cause of the apocalyptic golden age, but because this is what people had always done and would go on doing.

Being also a wise man with a chair in jurisprudence, Besold, I suspect, also looked to the claims of Protestant sovereigns to rule by force of arms and over the consciences of their subjects. Aware of the great flowering of mysticism and spiritual truth that had occurred under the old pre-Reformation days, he might have wondered if the rose garden into which God had called his chosen was not better kept and ordered under the old, admittedly corrupt, regime than under the new. Would the church not need to be regenerated from *within*?

Furthermore, I suspect that Besold looked hard into the future and perhaps

foresaw that the Protestant energy was much devoted to worldly gain, and that the entire experiment would in time degenerate into a chaos in which every man and woman was expected to find his or her own salvation—or otherwise—in spiritual isolation, preached at by selfselected evangelists, rationalists, and crazed "scientists" who never had the care of a soul in their lives, but who made gargantuan judgments about the future of humankind and the nature of humanity.

After the war, Besold published his encyclopedic *Orbis novis thesaurus* and was content to use the anti-Paracelsian scholar Libavius's summary of the Rosicrucians: "Chiliasts, prophets, reformers, Paracelsians, Paradise and Rose-garden dreamers . . ."

If even those persons closest to the core of the creation of the manifestos did not believe in the Rosicrucian experiment (if they ever really had), why then should anyone else?

Who now had the right to use the besmirched word?

The answer to that question seems to be, *anyone at all.*

If "ignoramus and cheat" John Heydon could, in 1660, declare himself to be a real Rosicrucian, then why not a group discovered in a Bibliotheca Vaticana reference of the same year by Susanna Åkerman—a clandestine sect of alchemists called "*una compagnia intitolata della Rosa Croce o come altri dicono dell' Aurea Croce"?*

This latter group claimed its wisdom derived from 1182, when an Italian knight called Morieno Romanus returned from the East with a process for preparing the alchemical tincture. According to the Eastern master identified as Ummayad Prince Khalid ibn Yazid (or Rex Khalid, d. AD 704), the process covered a spiritual message: *The philosophers' stone is within us.* (The original document on which the dialogue was based had been translated by Robert of Chester in 1144.)

Here was a sect of the Rosy and Golden Cross that had eschewed the antipapal teaching of the original Rosicrucian documents and taken aspects of them for its own purposes, preaching a commonplace of alchemical *gnosis*. Bizarrely, here was a sect that gathered around a poetic circle patronized by another Roman Catholic convert, ex-queen Christina of Sweden—in Rome, the city officially responsible for nonsectarian religion! (Besold, one can be

sure, had foreseen that the Rosicrucian furor would eventually boil down to competing sects, of which one, arguably, would be Accepted Freemasonry, with its provenance undeclared, if not undeclarable.)

In the confusion that followed the Rosicrucian furor, you could eventually find yourself the member of a (self-defined nonsectarian) church, while belonging also to a (self-defined nonsectarian) sect. Perhaps Besold's intuition that this situation could have been avoided if everyone made nominal allegiance to the Church Catholic might have, in such an unlikely event, proved mistaken.

It seems that cultures cannot survive without sectarianism of some kind. As long as people are people, there will be sects. Besold, after all, had realized to his own satisfaction that the *world* was a sect. Presumably, he came to believe that of all bodies in this sectarian world, the Catholic Church was the least sectarian on account of its claim to be a bridge between Earth and heaven and the Body of Christ on Earth, for all its wounds and manifest faults.

Andreae doubtless regarded such a capitulation to what he saw as the Catholic Church's false claim to theocratic imperialism as spiritual death. The Catholic Church, for Andreae, simply was not what it claimed to be. The Body of Christ existed "wherever two or three are gathered together in My (Jesus's) name." Catholicity could not be localized in Rome. Christ knew his own, whether in the flames or in whatever sodality they were born in, or strayed into. No human institution can claim to have a monopoly on the favor of God. The church existed only where the spirit of Christ was manifest.

Thus, for Andreae, the true Church of Friends of God would always be invisible in the world, since the world was in the grip of Satan until the end time. Whatever church one belonged to, one had only the right to *imitate Christ*, for in truth, the regenerated Christian belonged to him, not to any organization.

In Andreae's view, if the Lutheran Church was far from regenerated, how much further away was the corrupted Church of Rome, whose stupidities, cupidities, and oppressions had, for better or worse, led to the Lutheran defiance (preceded by that of Hus and others) in the first place? There could be no going back. Even if the whole world should submit to the power of Rome's Counter-Reformation and join up with Mother, it was certain that the

whole game would only have to be played out all over again when one worthy champion of Christian liberty rose up against an all-too-human and politically concrete institution.

The Catholic Church had had its day and only a total repentance, severance from low dealings with worldly powers, and a devoted and sincere return to the spirit of Christ could save it. Christ was not bound to it, and the conscience of the Christian was free.

Caesaro-papism was an undoubted evil, but a good Christian prince could ameliorate the evil, as, in Andreae's opinion, his experience with Duke Augustus of Braunschweig-Lüneburg proved. The papacy, on the other hand, showed no signs of reformation. On the contrary, it persisted in furthering manifest evil through the spirit of the unsheathed sword and draconian censorship.

It is tempting then to conclude from this discussion that a useful definition of "Rosicrucianism" is, on analysis, simply impossible, since one cannot stabilize a figure who was accepted generally to be a Rosicrucian, and there is no specific philosophy that one can rightly call Rosicrucianism.

Andreae's "R.C. Brother" was simply an allegorical approach to the ideal of the true Christian in his age. One might say that if, as Nietzsche believed, the first and only Christian died upon the cross, then the first and only R.C. Brother was called Tobias Hess and died in 1614.

As for the brotherhood, you cannot revive a body that has never existed, so all subsequent claims by Rosicrucian bodies over the next three hundred years to be linked by descent to the "first Rosicrucian Brotherhood" are entirely spurious. Nowadays, the original holder of the name would be able to copyright it, and that would, until the limitations ran out, be an end of the matter.

That is to say, is it legitimate to include in a book on the Rosicrucians every organization that has ever used that name? For example, if I decide to set up an organization using the title "Rosicrucian" (there is nothing to stop me), would a historian in the future be justified in writing, "We now turn our attention to the Super Imperator Plus Secret Chief Rosicrucian Gold, Ruby, and Very Cross-like Society of Lost Mahatmas, founded by its invisible chief, Tobias Churton, even though many have argued that this was just an elaborate, allegorical joke established by its author to prove that all

Rosicrucian organizations were fundamentally spurious sects with no secrets worth knowing, dominated by people who knew a good little earner when they saw one, and who kept their followers in various states of ignorance and irrationality with a tendency to actual insanity"?

In a sense, that question has been answered by existing histories of "Rosicrucianism" that have indeed been prepared not only to include any organization using the term for their own purposes, but which works have themselves furnished their own definitions of "Rosicrucianism" to suit their own purposes of priority and inclusion. Thus, for example, Susanna Åkerman writes in the introduction to her book *Rose Cross over the Baltic:*

> Rosicrucianism is a theosophy advanced by an invisible order of spiritual knights who in spreading Christian Hermeticism, Kabbalah, and Gnosis seek to enliven and to preserve the memory of Divine Wisdom, understood as a feminine flame of love called Sofia or Shekhinah, exoterically given as a fresh unfolded rose, yet, more akin to the blue fire of alchemy, the blue virgin. Rosicrucians have no organisation and there are no recognisable Rosicrucian individuals, but the order makes its presence known by leaving behind engrammatic writings in the genre of Hermetic-Platonic Christianity.

This is a very surprising definition to appear in an academic treatment of the subject, but it raises a major question. Just how far can we take the adjective "Rosicrucian" and still find ourselves talking about something we can recognize as such?

Åkerman refines her attempt at definition further on in her introduction: "While Rosicrucianism remains notoriously difficult to define, one can approach it as a Christian Hermetic theosophy with a specific theory of human restitution, effected through alchemy, angelic magic, Kabbalah, and with a background in apocalyptic speculation on a new order of reformers able to discern certain cues in Arabic astrology."

I am not convinced that this attempt at definition is any more helpful that that preceding it. I cannot locate "a specific theory of human restitution" in "Rosicrucianism" (other than nonspecific Christian and Hermetic doctrines) and consider such a "specific theory" a matter of wishful thinking. If you

want a “specific theory of human restitution” from this period, you need only consult the works of Jacob Böhme, who attempted to produce just such a theory.

Åkerman’s revised definition appears to be based on an aggregate reading of responses to the first (authentic) Rosicrucian writings. Never mind the fact that the first authentic Rosicrucian writings were not authentic in the sense that they covered an unspoken agenda; this conception suggests that there really was some kind of normative doctrine called “Rosicrucianism.” It is plain that “Rosicrucianism” means what the interpreter may think it meant. This is simply not good enough for an intelligible and reliable definition.

Susanna Åkerman then attempts to give us an idea of what might constitute a “Rosicrucian” (noun, not adjective, this time):

> In various modes, proponents of these modern esoteric schools [such as Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy] argue that each epoch will force out self-identified seekers of light, some of whom will perceive themselves as Rosicrucians. Individuals with such experiences will have developed life-instincts that pit them against what in esoteric terms is called “the black priesthood,” that is, against the objectively powerful and institutionalised interpreters of the spirit. To take such a perennial hidden plan for humanity as a real structure can be described only as an occult mentality.

According to this reading, we could make a case that John Lennon and Yoko Ono were, during their Peace Campaign of 1969–1970, Rosicrucians, insofar as John Lennon spoke of an unidentified perennial opposition to his limited attempt at imitating Christ. This opposition was, according to Lennon, visible only in its manifest forms.[1] John and Yoko Lennon were challenging the world, and as the Christian Bible teaches, the “prince of this world” is jealous over his territory. The opposition, Lennon calculated, did not know how to cope with humor—a calculation that may have been in Andreae’s mind when he wrote the *Fama Fraternitatis*.

Indeed, it is possible that Åkerman’s reference to persons who “selfperceive” themselves as Rosicrucians may be in some way in tune with the creator of the mythology’s intentions. That is to say, “You are of this

house of the Holy Spirit if you know yourself in yourself to be such and you sincerely conform to the ideal standards expected of the brethren." It should be noted that the standards expected were ideal, and it is unlikely that Andreae expected them to be realized in their fullness. As he wrote of his hero Christian Cosmoxenus, such a one exists nowhere in this world. Thus, the "true Rosicrucian" may justly be seen as a being "not of this world," in the same sense as Jesus declared to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

The mythology of Andreae is entirely supported by the belief in, and activity of, the spiritual kingdom. Thus, Rosicrucianism has functioned as a gateway doctrine to Christian mysticism, or to Hermetic Gnosticism likewise. Perhaps the beauty of Rosicrucianism is its inherent resistance to definition, combined with the paradoxical suggestion that it does not exist. One recalls Andreae's assertion in *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz* that "the highest wisdom is to know nothing."

It is very hard for the historian to see a thing as it looked in its first appearance to those who first saw it. There is a strong tendency—sometimes irresistible—to see a thing through the prism of vision constructed subsequently by the barrier of time. Is it then possible to get a clear vision of seventeenth-century Rose Cross activity or literature if one has already learned something of the use of the word "Rosicrucian" from later times? Things are often conditioned historically by what postdates them.

For example, it is practically impossible to see so-called primitive Christianity as it appeared to Jesus and his disciples at the time they were first active. Our minds are completely preconditioned by subsequent interpretation and mythology. The earliest Gospels were written at least thirty years after the events described and were written to suit purposes and settings unknown at the time of the alleged events themselves. Whether we like it or not, there is a generation gap in the story.

St. Paul was not party to the events, but we see those events through the eyes of writers who have had the stories interpreted for them by St. Paul and other writers, such as the genius who compiled the Gospel of John.

To give one small example of what I mean: You may know that St. John's Gospel begins with the words, "In the beginning was the Word [Logos] and the Word was with God." Jesus is then identified with the Word. Now,

imagine you were walking in Galilee one bright morning and you saw Jesus and you went up to him and said, “Hey, Jesus, how does it feel being the Mind or Word that gives intelligible meaning and creative energy to the universe? Would you mind if I called you ‘Word’?”

Would Jesus know what you were talking about? I rather doubt it.

On the other hand, he might say, “But you’re not supposed to know that yet! You’d better join my exclusive gathering where I try to give my mostly unlearned disciples a taste of what you’re talking about. Anyhow, where did you get that idea from?”

“Oh, I got it from this Jewish philosopher in Alexandria called Philo, who is writing a book comparing the Stoic Logos of the Greeks with the creative Wisdom (or *Sophia*) in the Jewish Bible (Greek translation). And being a bit of a time traveler, I can tell you that your disciple, John, is going to write a gospel about you with basically the same idea. Though I must say it’s a bit odd to think about: Philo at this very moment writing this philosophy down south in Alexandria, and here is his philosophical concept walking boldly among the lilies of Galilee. Rather poetic.”

“You say John’s going to write this about me? Surely not *this* John, brother; must be another one. Sure you didn’t dream this all up yourself?”

I give this unauthorized parable as an example only because there is a parallel with the absurdity involved here and the case of “Rosicrucianism.”

The Rose Cross Brotherhood began as a game and became a religion.

Does the religion have the right to claim the game as its own? I strongly think not, any more than if I write a piece of unpoetical rubbish and claim that it was inspired by the spirit of Shakespeare, and then demand that commentators employ the word “Shakespearean” to describe it, *because I say so*.

If you have the power to persuade people that your claim is right, that power serves to add weight to the claim, for sure. How many who submit to sectarian or cult leadership have the courage to tell the sect leader or leaders that they are talking out of an unmentionable vessel? The sect or cult leader is often protected by an insulating “occult discourse” in which to question a detail is to add impiety to insubordination.

Those who have not subscribed to any Rosicrucian organization are free to

see such organizations for what the evidence informs us they are. It is clear that the adjective “Rosicrucian” has been used to add some arcane dignity to many a novel twist to an old occult project.

We have a reasonable idea of what the founder of the mythology thought on this issue. We know Andreae regarded the exoteric work of Comenius as an indication of where he hoped the idea would go, now shorn of the cover story of Christian Rosenkreuz. We know that Andreae approved the establishment of nonesoteric Christian societies as a means of doing good works, furthering Christian education and science, and spiritually regenerating society from the inside. And we know that he was open to new discoveries in all areas of science without bias as to the ideology or theory that at the time best fit the phenomena. But could we call such developments out of his work “Rosicrucian”? Not, I think, with his approval. As far as Andreae was concerned, the word had done—if not overdone—its work. It had become a millstone round his neck and a bewildering scandal of mixed messages. And yet, one feels, he was still fond of his creation.

However, this brings us to another slant on the question. While I was preparing this book, I enjoyed a fascinating conversation with Dr. Christopher McIntosh, who has written several standard works on the history and mythology of Rosicrucianism. Dr. McIntosh was of the opinion that we did not always have to have the approval of the first creator of a thing to justify our examination of movements that flowed from the original “splash.” A person may not know the full ramifications of what he or she has created.

Christopher McIntosh suggested to me that the gathered and gathering mythology of Rosicrucianism was as historically significant as was the precise genesis of the movement—and many would agree with him. Roland Edighoffer, for example, believed that Andreae’s creation was gifted with the power of reaching deep into the archetypal level of the psyche and thereby taking up a numinous life of its own, to surface in the life of the conscious imagination with fresh vigor and attendant color of idea.

It was not Andreae’s *Fama* that would be heard in future (as she was in *Turris Babel*), but the variegated products of her having “crystallised the latencies of the human psyche.”[2] That is, unbeknownst to Andreae, his *Fama* had activated the archetypes. These archetypes would appear as spontaneous manifestations of unconscious processes now symbolized and given flesh in

the Rose Cross narrative, thus rejoining a mythological tradition transmitted since the beginning of the ages. Edighoffer's analysis may be regarded as a Jungian reading of the situation and somewhat transcends purely historical categories of causation.

In short, the depth and brilliance of Andreae's creation—and its extraordinary timeliness—triggered an inevitability of fresh mythological growths of the phenomenon, a sequence that may possibly continue forever; it shows no sign of abatement. Rosicrucianism, then, functioned as a new vehicle for a primordial *gnosis*, the accrued wisdom of humankind buried in the unconscious: the Philosopher's Stone itself. Here was a means of releasing the suppressed spiritual core of humanity and the world!

With stakes as high and heady as this, it is little wonder that proponents of Rosicrucian traditions have been most reluctant to ascribe this process to mere human beings like Johann Valentin Andreae. He, at best, could only have been some kind of willing—or even unwilling—tool in a process enacted by the secret lords of human destiny who dwell elsewhere, not of this world but not entirely divorced from it either.

According to Edighoffer:

> Certainly the literary elaboration of the protomanifests [the *Fama*, *Confessio*, and *Chemical Wedding*] suggested a project conscious and unilateral, but the images employed in these texts also had their own life, and they very quickly found in the heart of their readers their genetic ambivalence. The destiny of the Rosicrucian myth was therefore ineluctably to escape its authors, find itself in space and time, there to revive their avatars from the origins of humanity and to repeat themselves.[3]

If we follow this psychological reading, Andreae's work was, perhaps, in being bigger than himself, simply too good and too potent to remain in the vessel he intended for it. On this analysis, one can certainly see why Andreae became so livid with the outpourings of would-be Rosicrucians, whose writings, he passionately declared, deserved oblivion.

Games with archetypes and mythology can be very powerful indeed: they may reach into the parts of our being over which we have no conscious

control; like the lovesick, we may fall into the grip of the dragon of our unconscious while losing touch with the “stone” altogether.

Throughout the historical occurrences of Rosicrucian mythology, there has been erected a perpetual warning, such as that declared by Jacob after his dream of the ladder of angels: “How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:17).

People instinctively feel that these areas of psychospiritual activity are perilous and should be avoided. Such fears may be manifested as intolerant panic masked as ridicule. There may be persons born with the gifts to traverse such territory safely, but, as the mythology asserts, even wise Merlin may go astray at the sight of Morgana.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, in works such as Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *St Irvyne or The Rosicrucian* (1810), the Rosicrucian adept has become a person who has rubbed shoulders too many times with dark powers, powers that have unhinged in him or her a malevolent, consuming, and egotistical spirit; while, conversely, in Shelley’s wife Mary’s far better book *Frankenstein*, the Rosicrucian tradition of alchemy is simply seen as protoscience whose time has passed, its vaunted powers chimerical and superstitious.

McIntosh has called Rosicrucianism an “egrigore,” something that just grows and grows over time with a momentum of its own: a rolling stone that gathers much moss, of many hues. If this omnivorous characteristic be included in a definition of Rosicrucianism, then one may justly include any movement or phenomenon that can be shown to be derived from something preceding it, even if it seems a long way from the first utterance—as in a game of Telephone.

After all, even the Catholic Church has recognized that it is not a mirror image of the original situation of Christ and his apostles. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (they would say), the church has gone through a process of development; such was the nature of the seed that Jesus left for his disciples to work with, over time.

By this argument, of course, Rosicrucianism itself may be seen as one instance of that great theoretical, almost metahistorical development, were it not for the heresy accusation that, interestingly, unlike other ecclesiastical doctrines, never seems to suffer similar development through time.

In a sense, my effort to clear the picture may be already an undertaking far too late in its execution. History has, as it were, gotten there before me. The common usage of the word “Rosicrucianism” is not principally in relation to the movement’s origins, but to its flowering in the bizarre circumstances of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. I may, by this argument, have very little choice in the matter.

But there is a problem here, as you might have guessed. If we define “Rosicrucianism” in such general terms as to include practically everything that has gone under the name for the last three and a half centuries and more, we may find ourselves willing to call things “Rosicrucian” that, in fact, have no claim to have anything to do with the manifestos at all.

For example, in Susanna Åkerman’s recent study, one senses an irritation with Carlos Gilly’s emphatic insistence that only works which postdate the *Fama Fraternitatis* and that deal with the brotherhood of Christian Rosenkreuz may properly be called Rosicrucian. Åkerman would like the works of Röslin and Studion, for example, along possibly with the pre-*Fama* efforts of Sperber and Guetterman to be included as belonging to some philosophical and astrosophical emphasis that can be called Rosicrucian. Furthermore, she, along with other writers, has a desire to call people who responded to the *Fama*, and were part of other movements (Theophrastian, or apocalyptic movements of the stargazing kind), Rosicrucians, and their thoughts Rosicrucian.

One might object: What’s in a name? A Rosicrucian by any other name would smell as sweet. It matters, I think, because of the whole notion of authenticity, or contact with the “self” or source of a thing. Our word *authority* means coming from itself, in the way that the Greek word for “authority,” *exousian*, means “from the substance.” Likewise, we recognize the “voice” or “signature” of an artist in a piece of writing, sculpture, or music. Where that voice is absent, we naturally suppose the work to have another source called by a different name.

I remember speaking back in 1986 to the Altemeister (old master) of Gnostic scholarship, the philosopher Hans Jonas, about the Gnostic movement of the second century and the movements that followed it. Jonas was prepared to admit Manichaeanism, Mandaeism, Catharism, and Hermetism as legitimate kindred or descendants of the Gnostic inspiration to

varying and qualified extents. When I referred to a Gnostic church founded in California in the last thirty years, his reaction was swift: “Oh, but that’s *cheap*.”

He was not suggesting the persons involved were doing something of little value, necessarily; he meant that one could not legitimate its bona fides as a genuine or authoritative descendant of the Gnostic explosion of the second century AD. It might show an enthusiasm for that tradition, but you would not, in his view, go there to get in touch with the authentic spirit of the thing. You would not, as a scholar, respect it as you might a meeting with the Mandaeans of Iraq, who, as far as we know, have been practicing a form of late-antique *gnosis* certainly for over one thousand years, and quite possibly two.

That was Hans Jonas’s view, and I daresay there are a number of criticisms that could be made of the view, not least its possible intellectual snobbery. However, one must ask the question with regard to the revivals of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood in the eighteenth century and subsequently: Would you send a close friend to one of these self-elevated orders if you wanted him to find out about what Andreae meant when he composed the *Fama Fraternitatis?*

Again, I should say not. However, because a thing does not earn the respect due to the original (by those who value the power and authenticity of the original) does not mean that attempts to revive elements of the original deserve no respect at all from the historian. It is no inherent fault of men and women in the eighteenth century that they did not have the foresight or good fortune (or otherwise) to live in the previous century and have the opportunity to meet Johann Valentin Andreae in person. Nor is it their fault that the movement as an authentic movement had in certain respects died long before they were born, and that it was utilized afterward often by persons with whom Johann Valentin Andreae would have had little or nothing intellectually in common.

The fact is that nobody in the eighteenth century, as far as we know, really knew what had happened or who was truly involved when the Fama and *Confessio Fraternitatis* were composed. Readers of this book are now far better informed than they were on this subject; remember that.

Frankly, the version of the Rosicrucian story that was inherited in the

eighteenth century was one that Andreae would probably have dismissed as being the work of his perennial bugbears, the *curiosi*, which is why I have no compunction in calling this chapter "The Revenge of the *Curiosi*"—insofar as with the death of Andreae in 1654, there was practically no one to restrain anyone using the mythology of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross for their own purposes, whether nefarious, enlightening, pseudo-enlightening, or otherwise.

Thus, I make it my intention to investigate such of the later so-called Rosicrucian or neo-Rosicrucian movements as demonstrate a genuine and demonstrable intellectual link with the contents of the first Rosicrucian declarations and those writings that quickly followed them in response—with the caveat that readers understand that there never was a genuine Rosicrucian Brotherhood, and any subsequent attempts to use the name or even declare a link with the nonexistent original are wholly spurious and belong to the realm of fancy, imagination, occult curiosity, and, occasionally, mythology.

For this reason, while the second part of the book follows a broadly chronological scheme, this should not be taken as suggesting the existence of a line of authentic descent, with concomitant intellectual progress and evolution. However, almost all of the manifestations of Rosicrucianism included contain thematic links with the original seventeenth-century movement. In writing about them, I have endeavored to trace the movement or individual's ideology to the original sources, however far removed from the author's intention they may have been.

In the absence of Andreae himself, it is my hope that readers may encounter the original in the first part of this book. As to the attempted revivals of that movement and their developments between 1700 and the present day, I have located seven principal themes wherein a relationship may be seen between them and the original movement.

The seven themes are as follows:

1. the Invisible House
2. social idealism
3. practical and spiritual alchemy
4. a Gnostic pedigree

5. secret chiefs and unknown superiors
6. the idea, however interpreted, that *there ought to be a Society in Europe.*
7. Cosmoxenus—the World Stranger: the person “in the world but not of it”

By the end of the eighteenth century, while Christian Rosenkreuz was positively dead (not having lived), the Invisibles were nonetheless everywhere to be seen . . . proof positive, as Descartes had long since asserted, that they were not *real* Rosicrucians! At least, that is the rational interpretation of the story.

The corpse was revived, and, along with it, the mystery.

FOURTEEN

THE INVISIBLE HOUSE

Judas said to him, "In the vision I saw myself as the twelve disciples were stoning me and persecuting [me severely]. And I also came to the place where [. . .] after you. I saw [a house . . .], and my eyes could not [comprehend] its size. Great people were surrounding it, and that house had a roof of greenery, and in the middle of the house was [a crowd—two lines missing—], saying, "Master, take me in along with these people."

[Jesus] answered and said, "Judas, your star has led you astray." He continued, "No person of mortal birth is worthy to enter the house you have seen, for that place is reserved for the holy. Neither the sun nor the moon will rule there, nor the day, but the holy will abide there always, in the eternal realm with the holy angels."

THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS

We are born of God, we die in Jesus, we live again through the Holy Spirit.

FAMA FRATERNITATIS

The Rosicrucians had a bad name by the end of the seventeenth century. At least, that was the opinion, more or less, of Europe's mainstream cognoscenti. There were, however, people who were still prepared to rise above the common mind to reconsider the matter for themselves. One such was Gottfried Arnold, who was born in Saxony in 1666 and died in Brandenburg in 1714.

I think it was one particular work of Arnold's that may have helped swing the tide of concerned opinion just sufficiently for the name of the Fraternity R.C. to become more than a synonym for imposture, eccentricity, or witchcraft. That work was Arnold's *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* (Frankfurt, 1699–1700). The "Impartial History of the Churches and Heresies" was a remarkable and highly influential study.

A notable idea soon emerges in Arnold's work: that the true church also includes heretics—those who, in Arnold's opinion, have clung to a higher doctrine of spiritual regeneration than that of the moral and dogmatic injunctions of exoteric religion. In Arnold's view, there was *always* a true doctrine imperceptible to unregenerated souls. It might manifest in a church; it might not. It was eternal, transcendent, unchangeable, yet had been witnessed through time, even in the flames of the inquisitors' judgments.

In Arnold's scheme, almost unique in its unbiased treatment of the Gnostic Valentinians, the Cathars, and even Giordano Bruno, Arnold gave place of honor to Weigel, Schwenckfeld, and Jacob Böhme. Arnold also showed an interest in Böhmist writings like those of Abraham von Franckenberg, and in the Rosicrucians, whom he saw as part of the temporal manifestation of a perennial *gnosis* (spiritual knowledge).

Arnold attempted boldly to trace a line of descent of mystical theology from the first centuries of the Christian era to his own time, as well as attempting to define the essential doctrine of mystical theology itself.

In 1702, Arnold published two further works that demonstrated his conviction that the common element vital to the mystical doctrine was the figure of Sophia, the divine wisdom. Spiritual engagement with the heavenly Sophia was, according to *Das Geheimnis der Göttlichen Sophia* (The mystery of the divine Sophia) and *Historie und Beschreibung der Mystischen* (History and description of mystical theology), the key experience of the mystical *gnosis*—the gateway to the true doctrine of Wisdom.

While it is unclear how far the veneration for a feminine figure may have subtly altered men's perceptions of the value of women in spiritual religion (and of course, of the figure of Maria Magdalena), one thing is clear. Arnold's argument makes the existence of "orders" or mystery churches justifiable necessities for the spiritual seeker, in addition to official church membership.

Jacob Böhme as depicted in Edward Taylor's *Jacob Behmen's Theosophick Philosophy Unfolded,* London, 1691.

At a stroke, Arnold had liberated—and liberalized—the thinking of those who accepted his position. His antisectarian theology was both strict and humane. There was only one true doctrine, for sure, but other traditional dogmas might be questioned. For example, Arnold hoped for an *apocatastasis*, a universal restitution of humanity to its former, Adamic state. Restitution to the Adamic state would become an important component of neo-Rosicrucianism, whether universal or otherwise.

According to Arnold's conception of *apocatastasis*, after a period of purification, hell would come to an end; there would be no eternal punishment, as Catholics and Protestants—who had regarded the church father Origen's thought on this subject heretical—taught and believed.

Humanity itself was divine, though in our present condition, we had yet to be restored to it. This cry, presaged by Pico della Mirandola in 1486, would become the cry of the eighteenth century. Everything would be justified by the cause of Humanity to the extent that hearers might imagine the concept was a discovery of their own era of supposed enlightenment. Humanity would become the argument for the guillotine, the justification for Napoleon's military adventures.

Arnold was aiming for something much deeper than a liberal generosity to human beings or of imperial conquest. The Humanity to which human beings must be restored was a divine *Idea*, beyond the world, into which—or in which—humankind had demonstrably fallen. The ancient Gnostics called this

Humanity the Anthropos, who lost his highest, pristine faculties as he plummeted into material worlds. The hidden agony of the human condition was the cry of the divine *pneuma* (spirit) in the grip of inferior forces.

The ancient idea of a universal restitution, given a fresh supra-astral coloring, would become a key element in the thought of neo-Rosicrucians, even when that thought looked most attractive to members on account not of its novelty but of its extreme antiquity. Furthermore, Arnold's criticism of established religion has been influential even to the present day. There are many among us who will echo his thoughts that while established religion has its place, perhaps, the religion of the heart and spirit is the essential factor, each according to his or her capacity, in seeking salvation.

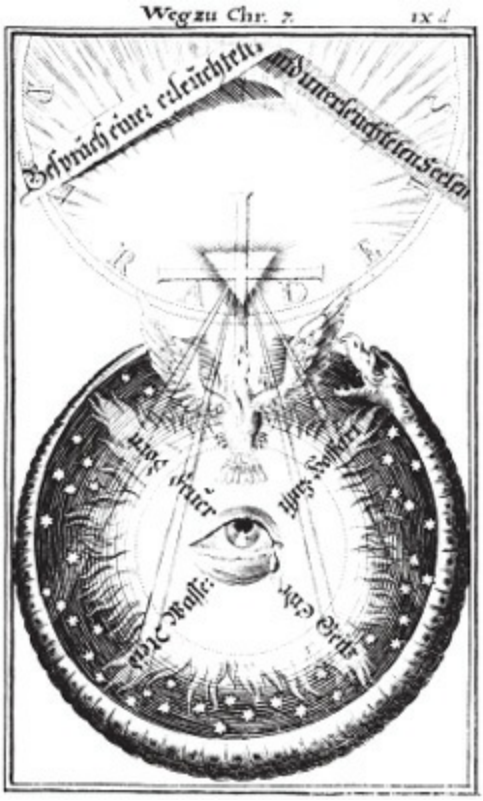


Illustration from "The Way to Christ" (*Weg zu Christo*), a collection of Böhme's writings first published at Görlitz by J. Rambau in 1624. Frank van Lamoen has recently discovered the identity of the strikingly original engraver of this illustration, Michael Andreae (no relation); *see Jacob Böhmes Weg in die Welt,* Amsterdam, In de Pelikaan, 2007.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

There were other significant factors that rendered Arnold's perspective even more apposite and influential. The first was the arrival in Europe after 1730 of Freemasonry; the second was the emergence of the Aufklärung, or Enlightenment, among European philosophers, scientists, and pundits.

A new age of rational inquiry was in progress, with many thinking persons challenged and inspired by the idea that if a thing could not be justified rationally, then it had no business being believed in. According to the Enlighteners (Aufklärer), Reason was humankind's only light in the darkness of superstition.

While many followed the rationalist enlighteners' general critique of the established churches (looking back over two centuries of violent religious conflict, it was hard to disagree), there was nonetheless a strong desire for a spiritual salvation that was deemed to come from a realm higher than reason. Atheism and deism never made much of an impression on people's hearts, having about them much of the grayness of that resignation associated with advanced years; we still associate rationality with coldheartedness—with reason.

Nevertheless, salvation would seem more likely if it could at least be justified *philosophically*. Here is where theosophy—and the theosophical thought of Jacob Böhme in particular—came into its own. In Böhme, men and women found a belief system justified not by external revelation but by a logical—almost geometrical—process whose aim was inward, mystical, and gnostic revelation. Again, restitution of Humanity was the crown of the Great Work. At the center of Man was God; if Man's rebellious self stepped out of the way, Adam would be restored to his true place: at one with God, at his own center.

Thus, one might follow the Enlightenment on the one hand as liberation of the spirit of free inquiry, along with a revived faith in human rational capacities; while, on the other, one might hold to an arcane principle of spiritual authority transcending reason. According to this synthesis—or compromise—reason was a gift of the spirit, an attribute of Wisdom, not a law unto itself.

Arnold's views were thus bound to find a willing audience in the decades after his death. Furthermore, Freemasonry provided a structure—a quasi-secret house, if you like—for entertaining mixed thoughts in harmony. That

is to say, the harmonic tension of the lodge experience, for the thinking person, was that of being simultaneously in a place where, as James Anderson's 1723 masonic Constitutions puts it, "reason surveys the Lodge and makes us one"—while also, in the words of the Third Degree ritual, discovering that while reason may lead one toward the *throne* of God, reason is yet transcended by a higher light, a light perceived by the senses, on which naked reason is reliant, as darkness.

"The light of the master mason is darkness visible" is a resonant masonic phrase that chimed in with Arnold's mystical path to spiritual regeneration. Many wished to tread that path and explore that darkness. To do so would require the light of the divine Sophia, whose wisdom was traditionally manifested in astrology and alchemy (the Hermetic arts) as well as in the seven liberal arts that both Maier and Fludd had specifically desired to see raised to higher levels.

The regenerated soul would be characterized by both reason and light. Their harmonious combination could be summed up in one word: Wisdom. A spiritual marriage with Sophia would thus become a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Brilliant young men were understandably seized by this new opportunity to produce a great synthesis of reason and spiritual hypervision and were not slow in taking advantage of acquaintance with literary sources that dryer, rational souls considered merely outworn relics of the Dark Ages. Such a one was the outstanding German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). Goethe read Arnold's *Ketzerhistorie* and concluded from his reading that he could now *create his own religion!*

Goethe would not be alone in considering that if such a path to total physical and metaphysical enlightenment had a predominant coloring, then that coloring was unmistakably Rosicrucian. He read *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz* with alacrity, borrowing its imagery for his own romantic poetry.

Hidden in the "black art" was a light superior to that of common day: a light to enlighten the enlighteners.

Now, perhaps, we may understand the great attraction of neo- Rosicrucian ideas to the men and women of the eighteenth century and beyond.

FIFTEEN

THE AGE OF REASON

Reason surveys the Lodge and makes us one.

REV. JAMES ANDERSON, *CONSTITUTIONS OF THE FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS*

Historians might like to tidy up the remarkable mess of the eighteenth century by calling it "the Age of Reason," but it really was not like that at all. It would be just as unfair to call the century that preceded it "the Age of Unreason." We might call it instead, "an Age of Criticism." More writers felt free to subject inherited knowledge to the scalpel of rational discourse, secure in the touching faith that God was a reasonable being who wanted his creatures to reflect this quality. However, the reaction to people imagining that they could investigate mysterious absolutes under the finite gaze of human rationality was neither slow in coming nor, in its own way, was it intemperate or unreasonable. Reason could be seen as a gift of the spirit whose best use was to express, within its limits, spiritual truth.

SAMUEL RICHTER

It is fitting that Samuel Richter wished to be known by his spiritual name, Sincerus Renatus, for we do not know when the reborn (or regenerated) sincerity of this pastor from the Duchy of Brieg in Silesia was physically born (we presume the late seventeenth century). Nor do we know exactly when he died (sometime after 1741). Belonging to a "hidden house," Pastor

Richter preferred, it would seem, to remain obscure. And it is from such obscurity that we move into the greater obscurity of the origins of a neo-Rosicrucian order in Germany. The movement from obscurity through greater obscurity is the traditional mode of alchemical progress, so we should not be surprised that it was for alchemy that the name Sincerus Renatus would become famous.

Eighteenth-century German neo-Rosicrucianism was marked by a far greater interest in alchemy than was prevalent in the Rosicrucian movement of the early seventeenth century, though we should recall that alchemy was still an active aspect of spagyric, or Paracelsian, medicine, and the Rosicrucian was supposed, above all, to be a healer. The eighteenth century neo-Rosicrucians were also moved by the spiritual or Gnostic interpretation of alchemy, a concern evident in the rituals of the Goldund Rosenkreuzer system, whose grade system was linked to a progressive alchemy of the soul and spirit. These grades were also calibrated by advancing knowledge of laboratory alchemy as well. The inner and outer practices were organically and psychically linked. Ideally, they were one.

Again, we should note a confluence in this alchemical discourse of an arcane science with a theosophical interpretation: a rationalized demonstration of that which was, allegedly, beyond human reason's immediate grasp—a step into the darkness, or, as Jung might say, the *unconscious*.

This gnostic or neo-gnostic emphasis is clear in the work of Renatus from the start. In 1710, he published in Breslau the *True and Perfect Preparation of the Philosophic Stones of the Brotherhood of the Order of the Gold and Rosy Crucians*. This was followed a year later by the *Golden Fountain of Nature and Art*. In 1741, these works were combined in a single huge work, *Sincerus Renatus' Complete Philosophical and Chemical Writings.* The final chapter consists of fifty-two practical rules to be followed by members of a supposed Rosicrucian Brotherhood after their initial confession of faith.

These rules have led to the supposition that there must have been a "continuity brotherhood" behind the work, even a continuity of the "original" early-seventeenth-century brotherhood. The former is a supposition with no corroborative evidence whatsoever to back it up, the latter meaningless since there was no original brotherhood.

Alchemical resurrection as depicted in Jean-Jacques Manget's *Bibliotheca chemica curiosa*, Cologne, 1702. (Artwork courtesy of the Biblioteca dell' Accademia dei Lincei, Rome.)

Besides, the author himself states in his work that the last representatives of the original brotherhood (in which he may or may not have believed) had left Europe and gone to India to establish a new community there! The statutes of that community he reproduces. India was conveniently distant—and conveniently vast enough—to deter the would-be hunter for the "original" brotherhood.

Richter may have started a trend with this detail, since in the centuries to come the journey of Rosenkreuz would be curiously reversed, as the home of wisdom was once more projected to the East, and neo- Rosicrucians would seek wisdom among the vast echoes of the Himalayas and other obscure regions of Asia. Curiously, no one went to Damcar, as far as we know, though Aleister Crowley had an amusing card printed in the 1920s giving his name and profession as "M.D. Damcar"!

In the meantime, it is unlikely that anything like the order referred to by Richter existed in Germany. Perhaps he hoped that by setting up the rules, one would emerge in due course. Here he may well have been truly inspired. Richter's work sets out principles that would be eagerly embraced by the century's yet-to-appear neo-Rosicrucians.

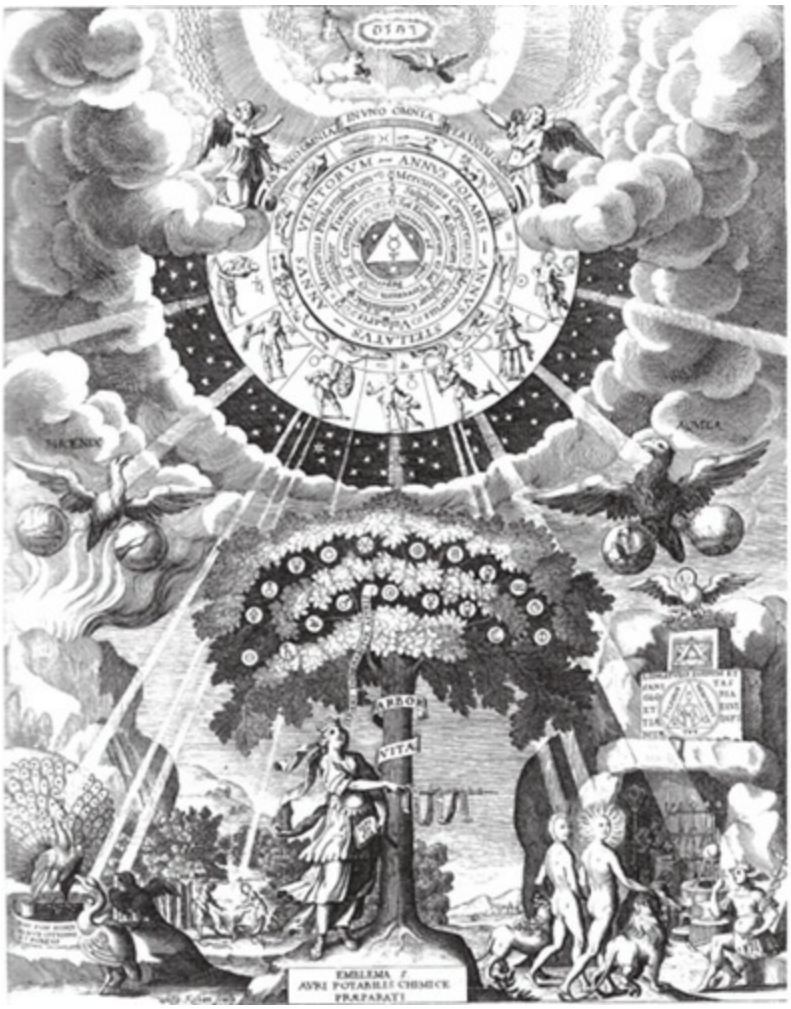
God and Nature cannot be separated—so there could be no philosophy without theology. This would be a credo of the religiously conservative Rosicrucian opposition to the Enlightenment. Richter believed in the unity of faith and knowledge, calling for a "Theo-philosophia." Richter almost certainly familiarized himself with the contents of such works as Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, whose second edition was edited by Benedictus Figulus and which Andreae considered a work of the *curiosi*.

Those who looked into nature and saw the divine process occurring therein were bound into a brotherhood of secret perceivers, beyond the common lot. They had seen that Jesus is the true Philosopher's Stone, whose nature was inscribed in the soul of every human being and which finds its mirrored reflection in the light of nature.

Humankind could be purified and redeemed by this supercelestial tincture in the core of its inner being. That was the spiritual alchemy; now for the practical side. Once Christ had purified the soul and regenerated it, a greater Arcanum awaited the true Brother of the Stone. The *lapis philosophorum*, the cornerstone of the golden medicine, could be prepared by the advanced initiate through the grace of Christ.

As for the members of Richter's Rosicrucian Brotherhood, time had clearly changed their attitude to religious confession. Roman Catholics could now be admitted, along with all confessions (this mirrors the case of Freemasonry after 1723), so long as the confession of the individual was reserved and remained unknown to other members.

Unlike in Freemasonry, members of this superior order were not to marry, though if the sexual urge was likely to upset the harmony of mind required for the work, sex with a woman was permitted. Members were to meet at Pentecost (when the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles was celebrated) and must change their names on becoming regenerated by the grace of the Stone. Secrets were to be kept secret while the Imperator (Latin for commanding officer, chief, or emperor) was to change his name and residence every ten years.



Malachias Geiger, *Microcosmus hypochondriacus sive de melancolia hypocondriaca;* Munich, 1651, engraved by Jan Sadeler (1568–1665). (Artwork courtesy of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam.)

Whether Richter's work led directly to a neo-Rosicrucian fraternity we do not know, but his Hermetic philosophy did influence the formulation of young Goethe's "private religion."

HERMANN FICTULD

Hermann Fictuld (1700?–1777?) was the pen name for a man of greatly disputed identity, but one whose skills in alchemy were celebrated by those who knew him and received his instruction. Early on in his life, Fictuld developed the notion of founding a Rosicrucian society according to his own ideas. We know this from the account of masonic historian Nettelbladt, who recorded information concerning the relations of fellow mason Baron Ernst

Werner von Raven with Fictuld between 1768 and 1769.

In 1749 Fictuld published the influential text *Aureum vellus* (Golden fleece), which, while praising the Rosicrucian Brotherhood to the skies, nonetheless eschewed the traditional mythology and instead traced its origins to Philip III, "the Good," who founded an Order of the Golden Fleece. In spite of this, it transpires that the *Aureum vellus* was nonetheless instrumental in providing the later order of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzers with the seed of their rules and rituals.

We know this thanks to a discovery made by masonic historian Ludwig Abafi in the archives of the Festetics family of Hungary in 1892. A manuscript of 1761 revealed the rituals and statutes of a Society of the Rosae Crucis, whose words were taken almost verbatim from Fictuld's *Golden Fleece*, with some regulatory input apparently derived from Sincerus Renatus. The document gave details of a Prager Assemblée (a circle in Prague) of the order called Zur schwarzen Rose (the black rose), officially dissolved in 1761 during an anti-masonic crackdown by Queen Maria Theresa of Austria.

Neo-Rosicrucian life in Prague and elsewhere nonetheless returned for a reform in 1767. The reform established a new grade system whose new ninth grade of Magus was assured of superhuman powers: "From them nothing is concealed. They are masters of everything, like Moses, Aaron, Hermes and Hiram Abiff."

Two years later, according to the account attributed to von Raven, a certain Brother O replaced Fictuld as his instructor in 1769. A quarrel erupted and von Raven was threatened with explusion from "the Society of the *Rosae Crucis*." This reference to an instructor as being part of the running of a Rosicrucian order not only strongly suggests the first reasonably reliable reference to a working Rosicrucian order but also probably implies the existence of an early form of the highly organized fringe masonic order known as the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, officially constituted in 1777.

The "Gold" of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer may have come then from Fictuld's mythological fleece or from other writings—such as Robert Fludd's —where a distinction was made between a golden and a rosy cross, between a heavenly and an earthly communion of brethren. Whatever the source, this novel manifestation of the Invisibles gave, if I may use anachronistic

marketing jargon, added value—the Rosy Cross *plus* Gold!

Gold never fails to attract.

According to von Raven, Fictuld was promoted by the order in the late 1760s, his alchemical expertise giving him authority beyond that of his former status as an isolated instructor. It is significant that Fictuld's book was later strongly recommended for members' attention by the Superiors of the remarkable order of Gold- und Rosenkreuzer.

Between 1731 and 1761 Fictuld wrote a great deal on the subjects of alchemy, Kabbalah, and magic. He favored "Theo-alchemy," alchemy blended with theosophy. Fictuld was also inspired by the movement of Pietism originally fostered by such people as Andreae's inspiring correspondent, Johann Arndt, a century and a half earlier. Pietism had developed in the university city of Halle and elsewhere as a dominant—and now frequently conservative—voice in German theology. Pietists stressed the inward, spiritual nature of devotion; personal sincerity and integrity were vital.

Fictuld corresponded with the outstandingly brilliant, Kabbalahliterate, and theosophically minded Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782). Oetinger had distinguished himself as a theologian at Tübingen and elsewhere with his far-reaching attempts to unify reason, theosophy, the insights of Pietism and Lutheran orthodoxy into a universal theology of life and nature. Oetinger, however, found Fictuld too addicted to secret signs in nature and the Kabbalah, more into the spelling of the Holy Spirit than living with it. Nevertheless, such contact with one of Germany's greatest universal scholars doubtless gave satisfaction to Fictuld's order's leadership. The Gold- und Rosenkreuzer's Superiors would show themselves to be interested in recruiting at the very highest levels of the German hierarchy.

DOM ANTOINE-JOSEPH PERNETY

Antoine-Joseph Pernety (1716–1796) was not a Rosicrucian or a member or progenitor of a Rosicrucian order as such, but his works were to overlap in interest with the thought-world and ritual experience of others with an interest in Rosicrucianism. This is principally because the name of the Benedictine Dom Pernety looms significantly in the story of Illuminism.

Illuminism was one of the responses to the impact of the Enlightenment's elevation of the faculty of human reason. According to the insights of Illuminists, the inner eye of the mind may indeed be identified with reason. However, this reason must be clarified or illuminated by a divine light beyond time and space and the realm of the external senses so that reason may flourish in universal wisdom and human beings may find themselves and see more truly the world around them. But what is this "light"? What is its nature? Answers to this question were sought in Illuminism.

For those Illuminists with an interest in the Rosicrucians, it was simply held that the original fraternity were themselves illuminated beings. So, by looking at the thoughts of the Illuminists or "Illuminati" (I do not mean Adam Weishaupt's secular, revolutionary order of that name), we may discover how the heroes of the *Fama* were seen by occult-minded men and women in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is interesting that the first book published by Pernety was a translation of a German mathematical textbook in 1743, by which time Perety had been a Benedictine monk for eleven years. Fifteen years later, Pernety's interests had begun to go from the known to the unknown. In 1758 he published an influential *Mytho-Hermetic Dictionary*, a glossary and index to his two-volume *Egyptian and Greek Fables Unveiled and Reduced to the Same Principle.* This principle he called "chrysopoeia"; it involved the preparation of a universal remedy for all illnesses.

We have seen this interest in the "golden medicine" before, back in the Rosicrucian heyday, and we are not surprised therefore to find Pernety's references to Michael Maier's *Arcana arcanissima, hoc est Hieroglyphica Aegyptio-Graeca* (The most profound secrets, showing Egyptio-Greek hieroglyphs; 1614), a work to which his own was much indebted. Pernety followed almost exactly Maier's view that virtually every ancient Egyptian and Greek myth revealed the arcana of alchemical processes to the initiated eye.

Pernety's eye could see many other things to which his culture was generally blind. For example, after the French took possession of the Falkland Islands in 1764, Pernety acted as chaplain on a French voyage to the South Atlantic. He not only celebrated mass on the Falklands but also, in the course of the voyage, took notes on the Amerindians' knowledge of

medicines. Returning to France, Pernety opposed the writings of Cornelius de Pauw, who declared the Indians' knowledge useless because it was "primitive." Pernety, rather, saw the Indians as an example of a largely vanished purity in humankind. In this view, he reflected the suspicion of some Europeans that Eden, or something approaching it, might yet be found in the South Seas, far from the corruptions of Europe.

According to masonic historian J. M. Ragon (Orthodoxie Maçonique, 1854), Pernety fell out with the Benedictine order and went to Avignon, where, in 1766, he supposedly created a new Rite Hermétique that added six more degrees to the three craft degrees. The third of the additional degrees was called that of the Knight of the Golden Key, which, while reminiscent of the Knight of the Golden Stone in Andreae's *Chemical Wedding*, was probably more inspired by the Golden Key ubiquitous to alchemical treatises. Pernety is supposed to have added a seventh additional degree, that of Knight of the Sun, the origin of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. The provenance of these degrees has recently been disputed, however, by leading masonic scholar Jan Snoek.

In 1996, a 1782 membership list pertaining to the Lodge La Royal Yorck de l'Amitié of Berlin was discovered. Pernety was a member, and the list shows he had passed through most of the higher degrees while in France. Masonry was suppressed in Avignon between 1764 and 1766, however, as the Inquisition was then active in the area. Furthermore, according to Snoek's investigation of the evidence, hermetically inspired side degrees are not documented in Avignon before 1774, so Ragon's account is thereby rendered untrustworthy. The Knight of the Sun degree has been found to have existed in 1751, so Pernety could not have invented it in Avignon in the 1760s. Nevertheless, the rituals of the Rite Écossais Philosophique that evolved out of the Rite Hermétique do show affinities with Pernety's interpretations of Greek and Egyptian fables.

Aged fifty-one, Pernety arrived in Berlin and was appointed by Frederick the Great of Prussia as royal librarian and member of the city's Royal Academy. His views were unconventional—in 1773 he defended the Pythagorean idea of reincarnation—but were not exceptional until about 1779, when he read some books by Emanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish civil

servant, philosopher, and visionary. Inspired by Swedenborg's own interior and visionary ventures into extraterrestrial worlds, Pernety published his own reflections such as *The Marvels of Heaven and Hell and the Planetary and Astral Territories* in 1782.

Pernety began to seek assistance from astral beings through spiritualist-type séances and theurgic rituals. One of his angelic guides was named Assadai, and another was known simply as Holy Word. Either the medium for—or the mind behind—Holy Word was a figure we now know as having been altogether terrestrial. The voice of Holy Word was provided by Johann Daniel Müller (ca. 1716–1786). This was an example of Illuminism in action.

Holy Word advised a return from Berlin to Avignon, where Pernety became one of the first members of a group later known, rather charmingly, as the Illuminés d'Avignon. Illuminist groups were persecuted during the French Revolution, and in 1792 the Avignon group was dispersed.

Before his death in 1796, Dom Pernety felt compelled to surrender his alchemy and Illuminist magic and return to his Benedictine beginnings. One hopes he was a wiser but not sadder man.

THE MASONIC EIGHTEENTH-DEGREE ROSE CROIX

A survivor of the period's peculiar interest in Rosicrucian mythology is familiar to Freemasons worldwide today. That is the famous Rose Croix—or eighteenth degree of the Ancient and Accepted ("Scottish") Rite.

Admittedly, the content of the ritual has very few obvious Rosicrucian elements within it—no references to Christian Rosenkreuz or the House of the Holy Spirit, or even to the Fraternity R.C. Pedantic masonic commentators have therefore been wont to conclude that the words "Rose" and "Croix" are purely incidental, and no Rosicrucian influence may be inferred. Such a critique makes no sense within the real context of mid-eighteenth-century Freemasonry, wherein myths soon lost their specificity, being honed down into moral lessons.

The moral lessons of the Rose Croix abide in the Christian virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love—learned through a symbolic journey undertaken by the potential "knight-mason" to an Eastern location, wherein an alchemical

mystery of the first order is enacted—namely, the crucifixion of Christ in Jerusalem: “The Cubic Stone pours forth blood and water,” as the ritual vividly declares.

The writer of the ritual may well have been aware of the simple Christian mysticism of Andreae’s post-*Fama* writings, though the flavor of the ritual more strongly suggests Catholic than spiritual Protestant sensitivities. The ritual is not concerned with the mythology of Christian Rosenkreuz but with the iconographic potential of the rose and the cross. This image is combined with that of the pelican feeding its young on its own blood, a clear symbol of Christ and his saving love.

The ritual was probably created as a potently convenient way of asserting Christian identity within Freemasonry (which was under threat) while retaining an atmosphere of suggestive masonic mystery. What better source for Christian subject matter in an esoteric setting sympathetic to the “hidden house” or ideal Lodge of Freemasonry than a Rosicrucianism that was fervently Christian, supernal, and fragrantly mystical in spirit? Toward the climax of the rite, for example, the soon-to-be-perfected knight-mason encounters a ladder (associated with Jacob and Beth-el, the place of God) that leads to an altar decked with roses.

The words “Rose Croix” suggested a mystical, magical Christianity in the eighteenth century, and they do still: something elusive and beyond reason. Masonry prefers inference and allusiveness to any implication of confessional specificity or metaphysical dogma: universalism, symbolism is all. After all, Freemasonry would be defined as “a peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.” In many respects, this late statement by William Preston (*Illustrations of Masonry*, 1772) may also be applied to aspects of neo-Rosicrucianism.

The original composition of the degree of Sovereign Prince Rose Croix, Knight of the Pelican and the Eagle has long been attributed to Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824). According to A. C. F. Jackson in his *Rose Croix: A History of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales*, the title first appeared in 1761 as a dignity applied to holders of the degree of Knight of the Eagle.

In 1766, a French Creole named Estienne Morin (d. 1771) completed a set of Constitutions regarded by the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Freemasonry

today as important foundation documents. These Constitutions were backdated to 1762, the year after Morin received a patent from the Grand Lodge of France naming him inspector general. Morin took the appointment as a mission to spread Masonry across the Atlantic in a form that suited his interests. He would effectively become inspector general of his own masonic constitution. Morin arrived in the West Indies in 1763, but it is doubtful if he had a completed Rose Croix ritual at the time. What he probably had was a list of some twenty-five degrees obtained from Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, the chief archivist of Freemasonry in Lyon.

As we shall see in due course, Willermoz spent a great deal of time in Lyon painstakingly examining rituals from across Europe, searching for the essential doctrine that would unify the whole. In 1761, Willermoz and his group formed a new rite of twenty-five degrees. Most of these were just names and were yet to be developed.

Meanwhile, Willermoz was also corresponding with one Meunier de Précourt, a master of a lodge in Metz who knew a little about a Rose Croix degree being worked somewhere in Germany. In 1762, de Précourt whetted Willermoz's appetite further with promises of "a thousand marvellous secrets" available in Germany, including an Order of the Temple.

Willermoz completed his Rose Croix ritual in 1765. Whether it was derived from Germany is unknown. Oddly, in 1765, a book (*Les plus secrets mystères*) appeared containing ceremonies that included a degree of the Knights of the Sword and the Rose-Croix. The degree bore no resemblance to that of Willermoz. Perhaps there was some kind of competition with proto–Gold- und Rosenkreuzers offering more than pious masonic symbolism.

The Rose Croix was popular, and by 1768 there existed a body in Paris calling itself the First Sovereign Chapter Rose Croix, whose statutes and regulations were issued in 1769. This initiative spread to Britain, where it was greeted by the few who had access to its work as the *ne plus ultra* degree —the highest form of Masonry, for "there is nothing more beyond it." From about 1775 the Rose Croix degree was worked in British masonic Knights Templar "Encampments" (these masonic Templars had no links with the medieval Order of the Temple).

Two years before the Parisian body was established, Morin's deputy, Francken, founded the Lodge of Perfection and Council of Princes of

Jerusalem in Albany, New York. A Lodge of Perfection was opened in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1783, the origin of today's Supreme Council, Southern Masonic Jurisdiction (U.S.A.).

Importantly for Masonry, the Rose Croix degree transforms the craft legend of Hiram Abif's murder by jealous builders by insisting that the critical event of Masonry occurred when the "slain Master" (not Hiram Abif but Christ, "the cornerstone the builders rejected") invited the mason to "die in Him" and be reborn in the Spirit. Hence the Rose Croix Knight-Mason is "perfected" at the climax of the degree. The substance of this message is radiantly clear in the *Fama Fraternitatis,* wherein the brethren discover the following words in the hidden vault of Christian Rosenkreuz: "We are born of God, we die in Jesus, we live again through the Holy Spirit." Such, in the Ancient and Accepted Rite, is the "perfection of Masonry."

Freemasons in general have been loath to accommodate the full implications of this realization. (See my book *Freemasonry: The Reality*.)

MARTINÈS DE PASQUALLY

The greatest influence on the life of masonic ritualist Willermoz was undoubtedly the extraordinary mind of Don Martinès de Pasqually (1709?–1774), as he signed himself (his true name was and is a matter unsettled). However, Pasqually's system of belief, while it may be classed as fringe masonic, cannot be called Rosicrucian. Nevertheless, his thought was in some respects inconceivable without the Rosicrucian mythology and tradition having existed before and in his time, while he himself would go on to influence what later passed under the name and description of Rosicrucian. For this reason, Pasqually cannot be ignored.

His fame rests chiefly on having founded an Order of Élus Coëns (Elect Cohens, or Priests) in 1765, the year in which Willermoz completed his Rose Croix ritual, the confluence of which dates attests to the remarkable amount of concerted fringe masonic-type activity going on in this period.

The Elect Cohens was not the first creative foray of Pasqually into theosophical ritual. In 1754, he founded a *Chapitre des Juges Écossais* (Chapter of Scottish judges) in Montpellier, the city that Haslmayr attempted to reach before being condemned to the galleys in 1612 when he was in

search of a Rosicrucian Brother. The word “Scottish” referred to the belief held in French masonic circles that authentic Masonry came from Scotland, on account of lodges having been established in France under the aegis of exiled Jacobites (supporters of the Stuart dynasty in Britain).

Between 1762 and 1772, Pasqually was based in Bourdeaux, where Morin also lived until leaving for the West Indies in 1763. In 1765 Pasqually formed a “Temple Coën” called Les Élus Écossais, which in the following year became the Ordre des Chevaliers Maçons Élus Coëns de l”Univers, the Order of Knight Mason Elect Priests of the Universe. Pasqually was “thinking big.”

The warrant for this grandiose creation was a translation Pasqually provided of a “constitution and patent” that he said had been granted to his father on May 20, 1738, by “Charles Stuard [*sic*], King of Scotland, Ireland and England, Grand Master of all the Lodges on the surface of the earth.” This document may have been apocryphal; it may not. The use of the name Charles Stuart was, of course, a reference to Bonnie Prince Charlie, who would later feature in the story advanced by the German Baron von Hund as to how *he* obtained a Templar Rite from the same royal source. That exiled Jacobites used Masonry as a support system is well attested, but whether the pretender to the British throne was involved is unknown.

The date of 1738 is interesting, in that the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of London produced its new book of Constitutions in that year. There may be a case here of an attempt by “Scottish” (or rather French) Masons of “higher orders” to trump London’s ace by an appeal to higher, absent authority. Masonic knighthood was best when granted by a king, naturally. It would require only the blending of Scotland with freshly coined legends of exiled Templars to launch a whole new mythological structure. This structure was inevitably bound up with the mystique of the Rose Croix and persists to this day.

Pasqually had apparently served in a Scottish regiment in Spain (he was of mixed Spanish-Jewish descent), and it was from the military that he gained his first recruits, who, incidentally, had to be Roman Catholics (another poke in the eye for “regular” Masonry). It was through the military lodge Josué that Louis Claude de St.-Martin became acquainted with the remarkable Pasqually (St.-Martin had been assigned to the Foix Infanterie).

Between 1766 and 1767, many were admitted to Pasqually’s order,

including Willermoz. It is strange that the three most fecund providers of theosophical, Rosicrucian-tinged fringe Masonry—Pasqually, Willermoz, and St.-Martin—all knew one another. Their collective influence has, in certain Continental circles, been immense.

Pasqually used Masonry as a structure, but for him it was largely a matter of historical convenience. While of part–Jewish convert descent, Pasqually was genuinely Christian; but as far as we can tell, he belonged to a branch of Christianity thought to be extinct: "Judeo-Christianity." Knowledge of this special tradition came to Pasqually, he said, by succession. He had obtained his understanding from his father.

Pasqually promoted his own hugely influential theosophic system. Willermoz, for example, came to see it as the essence of Freemasonry, and St.-Martin—who had plenty of ideas of his own—deferred to Pasqually's peculiar source of spiritual inspiration. The idea of a secret transmission of exalted knowledge resonated with the mythology of Rosicrucianism, as did its Christ-centeredness.

By the end of the century, it would be held that whatever had inspired the sage Christian Rosenkreuz had inspired the theosophy of Pasqually and St.-Martin as well; the works of each and all—along with those of Jacob Böhme—could be read in tandem, and as mutual reinforcements to a powerful strain of theosophical and occult Masonry. "Curiouser and curiouser," Andreae might have commented.

Pasqually claimed to receive his teaching direct from supernal Wisdom, and with that authority he penned his "Treatise on Reintegration." Pasqually declared that while man had been created in God's image, he was now in a state of "rupture" from God, a state of "privation," of separation from God. Pasqually claimed that this was not, however, the end of the matter. Man could yet, when reconciled, return to his original state. This return involved a Jewish and Christian *gnosis*, of which he said: "I am to recall men, my fellows, to their first masonic state, which is to say spiritually man or soul, so as to make them see truly that they are really man- God, being created in the image and semblance of this all-powerful Being" (letter to Willermoz, August 13, 1768). This promise may appear to some readers as lacking in potency. How could people be so inspired by the idea of being reconciled to God? Is that not what all evangelicals preach?

Well, not exactly. Eighteenth-century people lived in a mental universe very different from our own. It may be hazarded, for example, that Republicans and Democrats in the United States today would begin to feel faintly peculiar, even perhaps a little queasy, if they were to spend a few hours party to the private discourses of Benjamin Franklin. He might appear very different in the flesh from what they had imagined. His assumptions, language, and pitch of conversation would feel very strange to the modern ear.

In short, eighteenth-century people were, in general, largely of the ingrained opinion that humans were fallen beings. Their primary relationship with their creator was fraught and difficult; this made them feel fundamentally very insecure, if the pinions of salvation appeared shaky. Protestants were encouraged to find a personal relationship with their savior, but the thought of the time could make this difficult. Catholics were taught that they were far more likely to displease their creator than to earn or be receptive to the graces that might save the soul. Either way, human beings were very far from what God wanted them to be. There was a gulf between humankind as it was and as it ought to be. Sin and hell were close, and ignorance was no excuse.

Nowadays, most people have inherited a naturalistic concept of the human being. Some people may see themselves as really rather superior in some ways to the rest of the natural world, but still fundamentally part of it. Others see that we do not live up to our place in the natural order and are thus a kind of global ecological deficit. These are extremes, and most people exist somewhere in the middle. We think we are more or less what we are meant to be; we could be better, and we probably should be. But we are human beings in the full organic sense of the term; our bodies and souls (if we believe in the latter) are wrapped tight.

This was only a dream state for most people in the eighteenth century. When they encountered something like it in the South Seas, they immediately thought of Eden, and humanity’s prelapsarian state. For them, the human being as a finite organic creature was not what God had truly intended. Rousseau might object, but it was no good lolling about Arcadian streams, communing with daffodils and sheep and milkmaids, if you knew your friends were sick with scurvy and you yourself had but a short time to live.

Corruption and death were not removed from sight. Corruption and death and decay and humanity's pathetic and wretched condition were visible for all who could not afford to landscape their country estates in the manner beloved of some Greek poets. Life was full of rottenness and stink, and to that state all men and women, no matter how pretty today, would soon sink. Human beings had fallen, and the evidence was everywhere.

How might one be saved? Could one trust the church by itself, or was there a greater awareness, a spark of divine light, that required one's own will and concentration? How could the pearl of God's image in the human beings be saved from the mire that everywhere surrounded them?

Pasqually offered a way, which he declared had always existed and was now available in this new form simply because this form was appropriate for the times. In Pasqually's system, there were four classes of degrees beyond the three craft degrees. The third was the Classe du Temple, with the grades Grand Architecte, Chevalier d'Orient (or Grand-Élu de Zorobabel), and Commandeur d'Orient (or Apprenti Réau-Croix). That last grade opened up the gates to the fourth class: the Degree of Réau- Croix, which was a class of its own. There were seven degrees because there were seven gifts of the spirit.

Following progress through the seven degrees, the Elect Priest would be fit to enter a ceremonial cult, a theurgy that involved magico-spiritual invocations, activating divine energies. There was also a liturgy for invoking "spiritual and intelligent beings" (angels).

It should be borne in mind that for Pasqually, the word *mason* was synonymous with *man*. All humans are involved in the work of building, or are laborers in the vineyard. To be human is to have creative potential. Architecure is just one aspect of this, and one should not take the symbol too literally or too specifically, as is common in the craft.

The first Man was Priest King of the Universe. Then he became personal, involved only with himself. He may become a universal being again through reconciliation. Pasqually's system was basically a religious order, observed with prayers and restricted to those souls not in schism with the "true Church." His system offered an experience of reconciliation with God and awareness of higher being, not merely the theology or eventual promise of such. It was intended to expand the soul and mind.

Pasqually wrote that theurgy was “a ceremony and a rule of life to enable the invocation of the Eternal in holiness.”

Strange things could happen in the chambers where theurgic ritual was taking place. Curious manifestations of apparently supernatural activity that did take place in the chamber of operation were called “passes” or “luminous glyphs.” These were not to cause distraction in the operators, but ought, said Pasqually, to be taken as signs that reconciliation was in progress. The “pass,” then, was a manifestation of what Pasqually was apt to call “*la Chose*,” the Thing. “The Thing” was really nothing less than Wisdom personified—the divine Sophia.

According to expert on Martinism (the theosophical teaching derived from Louis Claude de St. Martin) Robert Amadou, “The Thing is not the person of Jesus Christ . . . the Thing is the presence of Jesus Christ,” just as the Shekhinah (or glory) was the presence of God in the Temple.

Pasqually offered a cult of expiation, purification, reconciliation, and sanctification. As such, it might be considered as a Catholic answer to—or even version of—a Protestant Rosicrucianism. Either way, the streams were now, thanks to Pasqually, entwined. According to St.-Martin, “This extraordinary man is the only living man I have known whom I have not fathomed.”

What Andreae would have thought of him would make an interesting study.

BARON KARL GOTTHELF VON HUND

Baron Karl Gotthelf von Hund (1722–1776) maintained that he had been initiated into a unique line of Masonry at the instigation of Charles Edward, the Stuart pretender to Britain’s throne. It was of course in the Jacobites’ interest to oppose the anti-Stuart, Whig/Hanoverian-dominated Masonry of London’s Grand Lodge, and suppose a superior brand of the craft.

The mythology involved in establishing this pretense drew on two principal sources: first, the belief of Jacobite Freemason Andrew Michael “Chevalier” Ramsay, first voiced in 1736, that Masonry was revived in Europe by knightly orders during the period of the Crusades; and second, the persistent myth of antediluvian patriarchal origins of Masonry, allied to the

Rosicrucian dynamic of sacred mysteries being returned from the East by knight-pilgrims. Thus, pristine Masonry was thought to have a role in restoring the primitive unity of humankind. This elevated idea was in accord with Pasqually's notion of reconciliation and restoration of the Adamic perfection of human beings.

In tune with the exalted nature of the "higher" masonic mission, von Hund established his Strict Observance Rite. The virtue of the Strict Observance was that it was held to be a continuation of a secret order of Knights Templar who had somehow survived the papal suppression on April 13, 1312.

Scotland had apparently given succor to the survivor knights and their secrets, now cunningly concealed in masonic lodges and nurtured by the chivalric virtues of Scottish aristocrats and monarchs. Thus, London's Grand Lodge—and the Masonry exported thence to Germany and France—did not have the *real* secrets. The need for secrets blended intriguingly with the survivals of Rosicrucian hidden-fraternity fantasies and gave the Strict Observance and subsequent orders of similar type their peculiar matrix of knight-masonry with hints of a deeper Rose Croix Christian mystical and gnostic commitment. This was a rich, heady brew and served as an antidote to the often tedious rigors of the so-called Age of Reason.

As has frequently been observed, a false idea is a real fact. There is perhaps no lie belief in which may yet not make it so, to the minds of believers. Belief in a link with old Templars has created the fact of new Templars. Their beliefs have become a motivating force in fact and cannot be dismissed simply because of a discrepancy of historical perspective. Many are happy to think of themselves as masonic Templars in the knowledge that they represent a kind of revival rather than a continuity of a vanished order. As French masonic historian Pierre Mollier has observed, neo-Templarism appeals to men who feel themselves to be strangers in a world grown too profane.

In 1774, the Strict Observance was established in the neo-Templar province of "Burgundy," that is to say, in Strasbourg, then in Lyon (Auvergne) and in Montpellier (Septimania). Two degrees, in addition to the three craft degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason, were worked. The first was that of Novice; the second was Knight Templar, wherein was revealed the secret that Freemasonry was in truth a survival of

the Order of the Temple, called to a sacred mission for which its members had long since suffered.

In Germany, the regular Braunschweig lodge Zu den drei Weltkugeln (To the three globes) adopted the Strict Observance and would later become a nerve center for the Gold- und Rosenkreuzers. Duke Ferdinand of Braunschweig became the Magnus of von Hund's order. It is interesting to see the descendants of the old families who had given sympathetic support to the seventeenth-century movement becoming patrons for the new masonic-Rosicrucian-Templar movements (the landgrave of Hesse-Kassel was also involved).

In 1775, Braunschweig was the venue chosen by the Strict Observance Order for a gathering of twenty-six German nobles to discuss its affairs and its future; as the Strict Observance, it did not have much of one. A year after the congress, leading members of the order journeyed to Wiesbaden at the invitation of Baron von Gugomos. This person claimed to be the emissary of the True Superiors of the order. Their headquarters was to be found in the East, in Cyprus (famous in history as a stronghold of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John). He hoped to gain control of the order, and, after inquiries deepened, declared he would return to Cyprus to obtain valuable secret writings to establish the order's genuine pedigree and exalted purpose. Gugomos was exposed; his titles and charters were forgeries. Not for the last time in this story, forgeries would lead to a breakdown of confidence in the order.

After the masonic convents of Lyon (1778) and Wilhelmsbad (1782), the Strict Observance Order died, but its ideas were to be substantially resurrected almost immediately. The Strict Observance mutated into Willermoz's Régime Écossais Rectifié: the Rectified Scottish Rite, better known and revered today in enthusiastic Masonic circles by the acronym CBCS: Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte, the beneficent Knights of the Holy City.

Willermoz did something with the Order of the Temple idea that owes much to the transcendentalist thrust of Pasqually's mind. What Willermoz did would prove to be of far-reaching significance, with a direct impact on the world of neo-Rosicrucianism.

In Willermoz's Rectified Scottish Rite, it is not the Knights Templar as

such who are important, but a transhistorical order whose existence goes back, allegedly, to the beginnings of time. The real Order of the Temple denoted something far greater than the particular holy chivalric order of twelfth- and thirteenth-century knights. The true spiritual Order of the Temple of the Universe could persevere because it was not dependent on the accidents of history or vast properties across the Continent (or a pope's approval or otherwise).

Thus, anything of a secret, mystic nature associated with the Templars was simply a manifestation of contact between members of that order (not everyone need have known about it) and what would later be called the Great White Brotherhood (where the word *white* refers to "white magic," sacred, holy, godly, light-oriented, perfectly spiritual suprarealities). Therefore, anyone asserting, in defense of the realities of history, that the Templars had no historical links with the Great Work of the redemption of humankind could be rebutted with the charge that such knowledge was not for everybody or even discernible to the intelligence of everybody—only to those who had received the revealed knowledge by authentic initiation. This manifestly occult discourse would not stand up in court; but then, such trials would be rare. In a sense, it was, to use a vulgar expression, telling the Age of Reason where it could get off.

The conception of a transhistorical order may be described as the fundamental conceit of neo-Rosicrucianism, and its creation represented a signal development in the story of the Invisibles. It was no longer the Rosicrucian disciples who were invisible, but their *masters*—which is not to say that expert adepts might not, as occasion required, themselves don the secret veil of invisibility!

According to the high theory of neo-Rosicrucianism, it is from the transcendent order that all true initiation derives. Therefore, *any* approved initiatory order could be declared to be but an earthly manifestation of the supernal order above space and time. Once this conception is admitted, the rationale is established whereby an order may claim to be in spiritual succession to the Rosicrucian Order, the Order of the Temple, Jesus Christ, the Essenes, John the Baptist, Pythagoras, the ancient Egyptians, the Cathars, the Gnostics, Appollonius of Tyana, Simon Magus, the Manichaeans—you name it: you have your bona fides lodged on an inaccessible (rationally

undeniable) level. You are double- and triple-glazed against the corrosion of the Age of Reason.

It would, logically, be only a matter of time before the Unknown Superiors would be considered to dwell in outer space. The more far out you are, the more far out are your Secret Chiefs. However, while some orders might revel in the fantasies of science fiction, most have preferred the strictly spiritual interpretation.

Approved orders may claim to have been contacted by the angelic denizens of the Invisible House. That the earthly manifestation of the holy sanctuary may be imperfect is of no importance to the argument. The masters are familiar with the weaknesses of humanity, for such they came to amend.

The Invisible House has, of course, invisible guardians, Unknown Superiors, Secret Chiefs whose work is of such an extraordinarily complex, multidimensional scope as, frankly, to be beyond the mind of poor benighted humankind. We, poor unregenerate souls that we are, wretches who can barely stand up in a posture redolent of *Homo sapiens*, may only get glimpses, flashes of the Great Work in progress, the Great Mission of cosmic alchemy of which we are—if we are fortunate—merely the temporal instruments, to be disposed of after use, in bliss or oblivion, according to our conformities to the masters' diktat.

Thus, it is also a logical certainty that the following passage from the recently discovered Sethian Gospel of Judas will be employed (if it has not been already) as an example of the Invisible House, glimpsed by privileged members of the Gnostic movement of the second and third centuries, and to whose sight the orthodox were—and are—blind:

> No person of mortal birth is worthy to enter the house you have seen, for that place is reserved for the holy. Neither the sun nor the moon will rule there, nor the day, but the holy will abide there always, in the eternal realm with the holy angels.

This very conception would (transhistorically?) appear in Karl von Eckartshausen's highly influential work, *Die Wolke über dem Heiligthum* (The Cloud upon the Sanctuary; 1802), which spoke of a transcendent church of unfleshly adepts who guide humankind's spiritual evolution. It is to this

body that Aleister Crowley sought ultimate admittance when he joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1898, and it is from this supposed body that many hierophants of neo-Rosicrucian mysteries claim their authority, an alleged authority residing not in “mere paper charters” but in direct contact with angels. Thus, the Angel Magic of John Dee will always be of more interest to such persons than the devotional writings of Johann Valentin Andreae. It is noteworthy in this respect that one of the most recent reprints of Eckartshausen’s work was undertaken by the Rozenkruis Pers (Press) of the Dutch Rosicrucian order, the Lectorium Rosicrucianum.

The theory of Willermoz and Pasqually underpins most neo- Rosicrucian orders and their offshoots. It is frequently the case that what brings such orders down is the discovery that the alleged links with Unknown Superiors are false. Thus, when Aleister Crowley, for example, advanced his own claims to establish a white-magical order after 1900 (as the Golden Dawn fragmented), he did so on the basis not that the Golden Dawn’s leader had enjoyed no contact at all with the Secret Chiefs of the order (that is, that they did not exist), but that the then leader of the order, Samuel Mathers, had flunked those contacts and no longer served their purpose. Mathers discarded, Crowley anticipated securing his own contact with a Secret Chief, achieved, according to his own account, in April 1904.

Along with the arrival of the transhistorical order (linked to a number of other Gnostic, Hermetic, biblical, and kabbalistic pedigrees) came the appearance of the transhistorical Adept Being, sometimes dignified with the term *avatar*, which somehow sounds more impressive and less sentimental to Western ears than “angel.”

We should therefore not be surprised to find that neo-Rosicrucian Theosophist and founder of Anthroposophy Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) believed not only that Christian Rosenkreuz was a real person (though of a peculiar type) but also that the name Christian Rosenkreuz was a kind of temporary cover name for one of a number of incarnations undertaken by a generous transhistorical spirit guide. The being who appeared as Christian Rosenkreuz later manifested as Le Comte de Saint-Germain (?–1784), for example. Sincere followers of Steiner’s path might yet enjoy spiritual encounters with the Adept Being Christian Rosenkreuz, for such, he was convinced, had been vouchsafed to him.

JEAN-BAPTISTE WILLERMOZ

Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824), a keen farmer around his native Lyon —where he was involved in primary education, as well as in the administration of religion and charity—was initiated into Freemasonry in 1750. From 1763 he became keeper of Seals and Archives for the Grand Lodge of Regular Masters of Lyon. He collected, studied, and compared every Masonic ritual he could lay his hands on, not only from France but from Germany as well (in 1772 he would write to Baron Karl von Hund to obtain information about the baron's neo-Templarist work).

Setting up his brother Jacques as president, Willermoz established a small chapter of the Lyon Grand Lodge to find the true meaning of Freemasonry. It was called the Chapter of the Knights of the Black Eagle, a title strongly indicating his sense of the importance to Freemasonry both of chivalric orders and of alchemical symbolism.

Willermoz found what he was looking for as a member of Pasqually's Order of the Knight Masons and Elect Priests of the Universe. Penetrating into the meaning of Pasqually's doctrines, Willermoz found therein "inner peace of the soul"; he remained faithful to the man whose uniqueness had made such a profound impression upon him.

For his part, Pasqually appointed Willermoz inspector general of the Orient of Lyon and Grand Master of the Grand Temple of France. It may be supposed that Willermoz enjoyed grand titles, because he embroidered quite a number of them himself. Having reached the top of Pasqually's order—the Réau Croix degree—Willermoz, as we have seen, sought to establish his own order in the hope of synthesizing all known Masonic systems and rites as a perfected vehicle for Pasqually's doctrine of Reintegration. However, correspondence with von Hund only furnished Willermoz with the initial sense that the Strict Observance was "nothing but a baseless and proofless system"; it lacked the timeless quality Willermoz found in abundance in the universe of Pasqually. Willermoz considered that the German's work showed "a profound ignorance of the essential things." This could not be said of the Elect Cohens, by contrast, whose doctrine demonstrated "a Masonry beyond Masonry." The Rectified Scottish Rite, designed to be a Masonic winner, was duly launched at the Convent des Gaules in Lyon, November–December

1778, shortly before the British army took the American rebellion southward and captured Savannah, then the capital of Georgia.

Revolutionary universalism was in the air. Across the Atlantic, where the French fleet ran aground after failing to attack the British in New York, the revolution of humankind smelled not of incense, but of gunpowder.

Willermoz's ideas of the rights of human beings were to be found in the fourth circle of his Rectified Scottish Rite. After the candidate had passed through three preparatory circles, a fourth, inner circle awaited the promising Mason. Behind the veil of mystery lay—surprise, surprise!—no less a conclave of adept beings than the Order of Elect Cohens of the Universe. There, the knight-Mason could encounter the exclusive knowledge of that order: Kabbalah, theurgy, and alchemy. He could learn to change the world.

Indeed, learning was an important function of the order. Pasqually's doctrine of Reintegration was nothing less than "the science of man" at the heart of Masonry, and therefore at the heart of all human spiritual aspiration.

The human being was made in the image and likeness of God. After the Fall, the human retained the image but not the likeness. The goal of initiation was imitation. Human intellect was a gift from God, and it was humankind's duty to cultivate it. Willermoz established pedagogic programs designed to impart a knowledge that was believed to be no more than the faithful transmission of a very ancient doctrine.

As we have seen, this science of Reintegration derived, in Willermoz's words, from a unique High and Holy Order. No Mason could desire more than this, the ancient *gnosis* of humanity. Like the Knights Templar or the work of Christian Rosenkreuz, the Rectified Rite was itself only a temporary manifestation of the activity of the supernal order. Nevertheless, as such, the Rectified Scottish Rite was *meant to be.*

After a checkered journey through terrestrial time, the rite is still alive and kicking. Without it, there would have been neither a *Da Vinci Code* nor the elaborate game that is the Priory of Sion.

LOUIS CLAUDE DE ST.-MARTIN

The name linked most strongly since the eighteenth century to the trans-historical scheme of redemption, "restitution," or reintegration is not that of

Pasqually, but of his student, Louis Claude de St.-Martin (1743–1803). Those who revere St.-Martin's teachings and follow the lines established by him are called Martinists, which is not to say that St.-Martin himself would approve of everything Martinists say and do. Ideas—even transcendentally great ones—develop, of course.

St.-Martin's pseudonym was in tune with his fundamental teaching. He was called the Unknown Philosopher, which may mean many things. An unknown philosopher would go very well with an invisible fraternity.

Sometime between August and October 1768, St.-Martin joined the Order of Elect Cohens, Pasqually's order, and worked as Pasqually's secretary from 1768 to 1771. He learned from Pasqually's Illuminism about the existence and theurgic engagement with superior (allegedly) angelic powers. Through ceremonial magic, St.-Martin followed Pasqually's adept path to illumination in an attempt to recover the pristine faculties of Adam, before the Fall. This was the single aim of Masonic theosophy—no wonder adepts have been inclined to look down on mere craft Freemasons!

Enjoying the hospitality of Willermoz in Lyon, St.-Martin wrote his most famous and most widely disseminated work, *Des érreurs et de la vérité, ou les hommes rappelés au principe universel de la science* (Of errors and of truth, or men recalled to the universal principle of science; 1775), in which Pasqually's ideas underwent transformation into a Martinist system.

The book contains a wide-ranging critique of the concept of reason advocated by the secular enlightenment. True enlightenment does not come from the senses or the calculations of the brain. Enlightenment—like religion—is a supernatural gift. Religion is a means of transmitting wisdom to such as can perceive it. The True Cause of all is not a philosophic principle cut to the size of human reason but an active and intelligent Being who is Being Itself. The True Cause is capable of a thing unimaginable and incalculable to unaided reason.

The Fall itself can be overcome. The scattered and fragmented faculties of humans are like a mirror broken by the impact of the Fall. They cannot reflect the true light accurately until reunified by regeneration. This rectification of the dignity of humankind is made possible through the virtue of the sacrificial act of the *Réparateur*. Christ the Word is the Repairer, the mender of the rupture that separates humankind and its primal state of "man-God." Physical

nature, which has also fallen, is not immune to the work of the Réparateur. The physical world will also be regenerated when the universe reattains the Edenic condition (this thinking is in tune with aspects of the promises of the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*).

The task of St.-Martin and his system (which was itself a revelation transcending reason) was to lead humanity to the supernatural abilities and consciousness that were in truth its own by right, but regarding which St.-Martin's generation had completely lost the idea, imagining the "rights of man" applied merely to matters of representative administration.

St.-Martin was mindful of some of the scientific and (as would later be classed) quasi-scientific ideas of his era. Among these ideas could be found the highly influential discovery of Mesmerism (after Franz Anton Mesmer, 1734–1815) and his ideas of animal magnetism.

St.-Martin contacted the Marquis de Puységur and the Societé de l'Harmonie, which explored esoteric mesmerism. This society established lodges of mesmerists who gave respite from suffering to many people by an application of novel methods of sensual amelioration, though the scientific explanation for the phenomena was so weak as to lead to widespread academic condemnation of the mesmerists as quacks.

Mesmerism was the forerunner of hypnosis and psychoanalysis, which still endure an uneasy relationship with the world of strict experimental method. St.-Martin's fundamental reading of the phenomena of mesmerism was that we must renew ourselves by reentering our true nature. The theories of "alienist" Carl Jung have, since the 1920s, restored interest in the relationship between theurgy, alchemy, and gnostic symbology and the health of the mind. It is now common to hear such words as *projection, animus* and *anima*, and *collective unconscious*, as well as discussions of the role of the archetypes in what Jung regarded as the self-regulating nature of the psyche.

Jung—a kind of neo-Gnostic in his way—pointed to four ideally harmonious aspects of the psyche: reason, intuition, feeling, and sensation. The faculty of reason alone should not be permitted to stand in isolation as lord over all it surveys. What Pasqually called "reconciliation" may not be so very far from Jung's concept of "individuation," the finding of the reintegrated self in the dynamic harmony of the whole. In this context, we may see the antirationalist stance of St.-Martin and his associates as

pioneering efforts in the ongoing development of a mature psychology, a work perhaps barely begun, pioneered, as usual, by “quacks.”

On July 4, 1790, St.-Martin asked Willermoz to strike his name from the Masonic registers. St.-Martin had discovered Jacob Böhme!

Böhme’s work introduced St.-Martin to a theosophical vision of human regeneration that stood in need neither of Masonic structuring nor of theurgic posturing. St.-Martin concluded that it was the divine Sophia who enables us to be reborn to the true life. The spirits that appeared to the Elect Cohens were, by comparison, impure. St.-Martin’s book Ecce homo (1792) showed how fully he had embraced Böhme; the initiation of Christ (as shown in the Böhme collection The Way to Christ; 1624) was the only way.

St.-Martin developed the idea of the man-God, the cooperator and minister of the divine will, charged with a mission of salvation. While St.-Martin began advocating a government of people chosen by God to lead humanity, his friend Niklaus Anton Kirchberger opened St.-Martin’s mind to the works of Madame Guyon, von Eckartshausen, Heinrich Jung-Stilling, Jane Lead, John Pordage, Thomas Bromley, Johann Georg Gichtel, Caspar Schwenckfeld, and Valentin Weigel.

As a result of taking in the new vista, St.-Martin greatly stimulated the development and geographical expansion of Illuminism. In Russia, Illuminism would flourish under the reign of the empress Catherine II . Illuminism would influence the movement of Romanticism in the fields of poetry, the philosophy of the imagination, epistemology, and the philosophy of history. In the nineteenth century, Balzac would be among many writers influenced by the collective inspiration of Illuminism.

Furthermore, St.-Martin could be read in terms of a progressive social evolution of humanity, advancing toward an age of the Holy Spirit or Paraclete.

What was peculiar about his thought was that while it was clearly gnostic, aiming at the return of humankind to the divine Pleroma (fullness), it did not appear world-denying in the ascetic or radical Gnostic sense. Progress on Earth was regarded as a kind of by-product of spiritual evolution—in alchemical terms: the *parergon* of the *ergon* (Work). The ultimate aim was totally otherworldly, but it was also transformative of the world. In this process, the events of the world had real meaning.

Ergon and *parergon* (Work and by-product); oratory and laboratory. Theophilus Schweighart (Daniel Mögling), *Speculum sophicum rhodostauroticum*, 1618.

The French Revolution, for example, was considered by St.-Martin as something that could be decoded as a terrestrial hieroglyph of spiritual value. The events of the revolution embodied the quest of humankind for right order according to the inner drive for reconciliation and reintegration with God's will, while its violence served as a sign of the punishment for past indifference to the True Cause. Thus, the historical revolution represented a foreshadowing of a far greater liberation of humanity still to come: a profound and painful lesson, a sacrifice.

Nevertheless, the important thing for the individual was to seek the light by which a cosmic amnesia could be overcome. This was possible by paying attention to the residual fragment of the divine image that still exists in the human being. This residual light will mark the first steps toward reorienting our wills with the divine will, thus restoring to fullness the original divine image and likeness. A new kind of human being should emerge from this process that is at once suprahistorical—like the assembly of the perfected—and historical, in that the reconciliation takes place within the processes of

life on Earth.

St.-Martin praises the "*hommes de désir*," the people who desire the drawing forth of divine life out from under the bondage of the fallen condition. Such people imitate Christ and thus incarnate consciousness of the divine Word and Wisdom; they expiate the world through their sacrificial suffering.

Thus, St.-Martin advocates the unity of the spiritual message of deliverance and reconciliation through time in a manner that, while it might be considered as complementary to the idea of the transhistorical community of the Rectified Scottish Rite, is, arguably, superior to it as a conception, since its universality manifests a mature disinterest in Masonic or fringe-Masonic parahistory. It might be said that St.-Martin, through engaging with the leaven of Böhme, had moved from the position of the *curiosus* to that of Andreae's Christianus.

There is an echo of Andreae's Christian Cosmoxenus in St.-Martin's ideal "person of desire" (whose arrows, incidentally, were being simultaneously fired into the deaf ears of London by artist William Blake). Separated from the material kingdom—the vegetable life—by selfimmolation (the replacement of selfhood or egocentricity by the superior Stone of Christ), the people of desire put into praxis a spiritual ministry, regenerating others through their self-sacrifice—the laying of all their goods before the Réparateur.

St.-Martin called for the people of desire to participate willingly in the Great Work of Reintegration. When the call was heeded, humanity would be showered with the divine mysteries that the rationalist, so-called Enlightenment rejected outright.

This message strikes me as being consistent with the promise of the *Fama*, albeit articulated in a new era with its own priorities and preconceptions: "so that finally Man might thereby understand his own Nobility and Worth, and why he is called Microcosmus, and how far his knowledge extendeth into Nature" (*Fama Fraternitatis*).

St.-Martin also foresaw the reintegration of Eternal Nature, a message particularly apposite to the concerns of this time, two hundred years later. His work *De l'esprit des choses* (Of the spirit of things) was of great interest to German Naturphilosophie (Nature-philosophy), whose spirit came alive again

in the imagination of some German “Greens” during the late 1970s and 1980s. (I speak from experience.)

According to St.-Martin, “The imagination is the spiritual part of humanity that possesses the vision of all things. . . . Through imagination we grasp the spiritual unity of the universe.” William Blake could hardly have put it better! But then, St.-Martin and the English artist and visionary had common sources: Böhme and Paracelsus.

St.-Martin was also aware of some of the pitfalls of too close an adherence to the determinism exhibited by some forms of astrology. The wise person rules his or her stars, not the other way around. The will of the human being to follow God’s will may be obstructed by literal interpretations of astrological symbols. St.-Martin called this power to pervert the course of the human journey “astral magism,” considering it a distortion of the rays of reflected light encoding the divine will. This doctrine he almost certainly found in Weigel’s *Astrology Theologized* and may have also found in Andreae’s *Consideration of the Horoscope of Christian Cosmoxenus*.

St.-Martin, in keeping with the concerns of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*, was also concerned with the theory of language, aware that a great gulf separates humankind from the original Adamic tongue that once contained the essence of a thing, so that to say the “word” was to call the thing itself *from within*. Without this Adamic language, communicating divine truth would always suffer from a large degree of impairment.

Limitations of language often suggested limitations of doctrine. For example, if we say “kingdom of heaven,” do we mean the literal translation from the Greek Bible, which would suggest a realm of the daytime sky and outer space ruled by an emperor? It as obvious to St.-Martin that the words represented a simile and metaphor for a spiritual reality, only in part decoded through our fallen language. The spiritual reality might be inferred imaginatively from concentrating on the limitlessness of what our eyes present to us. Our eyes do not reveal the whole truth. There is another language, a language of symbol, but this is seldom grasped, and the poet’s gift to unify the poetic vision with words is not appreciated universally.

Christ is the Word, and therefore to become fully reconciled to him is simultaneously to obtain a new tongue, a new language. Such a new tongue was promised as a gift of the coming golden age in the *Confessio*

Fraternitatis, prefigured in the biblical story of Pentecost, when the disciples of Jesus suddenly received linguistic gifts so extraordinary that onlookers mistook the spectacle for one of drunkenness. Indeed, they had enjoyed a taste of the new kingdom.

This account in the Acts of the Apostles may itself be seen, according to the system of St.-Martin, as a slice of history valued for the divine signs it encodes. The more the people of desire are reintegrated into the Pleroma (fullness of God), the more of the divine signs they are empowered to decode, the greater their grasp of the original language of creation. When they fully embrace their Sophia, they are gifted with the fullness of the Word. In St.-Martin's view, historical events are symbolic of, not instruments of, the reintegration of humanity. When the job is done, there will be no scroll to roll up; the end will be in its beginning.

One feels that St.-Martin not only discovered the continent of Jacob Böhme, but also enjoyed an extended stay on the island of Christianopolis as well!

HANS HEINRICH VON ECKER UND ECKHOFFEN AND BERNHARD JOSEPH SCHLEIS VON LÖWENFELD

Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen (1750–1790) was a Bavarian army officer who founded two fringe Masonic orders. His Order of the Wheel and of the Golden Cross (Ordo Rotae et Aureae Crucis), founded in 1776, disappeared in 1779. It is believed that Adam Weishaupt of Ingolstad founded his secular, revolutionary order of Illuminati partly as a reaction to the esoteric character of Eckhoffen's order.

Eckhoffen was already a member of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer system, but was expelled in 1780. In 1782, he apparently attacked it in a pamphlet, "Die Rosenkreuzer in seiner Blösse" (The Rosicrucian in his nakedness, by "Magister Pianco"), from which source we may learn more of the remarkable order of Gold- und Rosenkreuzer.

Eckhoffen's pamphlet was immediately answered by Bernhard Joseph Schleis von Löwenfeld (1731–1800) in a counter-pamphlet entitled "The

Rosicrucian Radiant in the Light of Truth." Eckhoffen replied to this in his own name, denying he had written the first pamphlet.

Von Löwenfeld, a resident of Salzbach, was a provincial leader of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, the order that, judging from the pamphlet controversy between him and Eckhoffen, had emerged in 1763 with a claimed pedigree stretching back to the biblical patriarchs and transmitted through time through high Rosicrucian *adepti*. In particular, the Goldund Rosenkreuzer claimed heirship to a *gnosis* transmitted by angels to a descendant of Noah, who had not participated in the construction of the Tower of Babel (and who had therefore retained the Adamic language). Moses, meanwhile, was initiated in Egypt, while the tradition of humankind's true nature, origin, and destiny had been transmitted by the prophets, at the original Rites of Eleusis in Greece, by Pythagoras, and by the Druids and bards of the Gauls.

At the time St. Mark founded (according to tradition) the Christian Church in Egypt, he encountered a magical hierophant named Ormus whose mystical Gnostic symbol, said the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, was a gold and red cross. This was the origin of their title, they claimed, a projection into world history of a supercelestial order whose operation had been observed in the previous century but which had stayed true to its nature and remained hidden. It was strongly implied that those Unknown Superiors who had been behind the seventeenth-century episode were behind the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer.

However, according to Roland Edighoffer, the Gold- und Rosenkreuzers' currently revered master of thought was probably the very human figure of Swabian Pietist and academic Friedrich Christoph Oetinger, whom we last encountered in correspondence with Hermann Fictuld.

The official launch of the *Gold- und Rosenkreuzer Älteren Systems* (The gold and Rosicrucians of the ancient systems) may be dated as having taken place in 1777 with the appearance of von Löwenfeld's "Strong Proofs Drawn from the Writings of the Very Holy Order of the Goldund Rosenkreuzers." This was a book of instructions for brethren who were already "Masters of the Reflection of the Light."

This latter designation was made to distinguish them from ordinary master masons, who had only a "reflection of the light." For master masons to satisfy their souls' desire for more, they would have to enter the heart of the Temple.

Membership in the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer was thus deemed a masonic privilege. Predictably, then, on account of this attraction and that of the order's excellent organization, the order flourished, with societies in Silesia, Upper Lusatia, Marburg, Ratisbon, Leipzig, and Vienna, where the Grand Master of the Freemasons of Austria, Prince von Dietrichstein (1728–1808), was received into the company of the masters of the light's reflection.

Business flowed more or less smoothly in this, the world's first mailorder mystery school, until the late 1780s, when the order was damaged below the waterline chiefly as a result of the activities of two of its most senior members, Wöllner and von Bischoffswerder (both originally members of the Strict Observance).

Johann Rudolf von Bischoffswerder and Johann Christof Wöllner, with the assistance of the duke Friedrich Augustus of Braunschweig, infiltrated the mind of the crown prince of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm. Freidrich Wilhelm had already joined the Strict Observance in 1778 and had become involved in the Templarist and Illuminist court around the duke of Braunschweig.

Wöllner and von Bischoffswerder initiated the crown prince into the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer on August 8, 1781. The heir to the throne of Prussia then looked forward to the possession of supernatural powers, while Wöllner and von Bischoffswerder looked forward to the theocratic transformation of northern Germany. It did not work out that way for any of them. (See Christopher McIntosh's study *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*.)

Wöllner in particular outraged many academic Aufklärer (advocates of the Enlightenment) by his conservative religious policy after the king appointed him head of the Department of Religious Affairs in July 1788. Two edicts in particular issued by the Oberhauptdirektor of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer in his state role angered and frustrated the Aufklärer. Nevertheless, while imposing censorship on liberal or rationalist interpretations of religion (philosopher Immanuel Kant fell foul of Wöllner's "Edict of Censorship" in 1794), Wöllner's "Edict Concerning Religion" did establish religious toleration in Prussian law for the first time.

Nevertheless, a covert struggle against the rationalist Illuminati of Adam Weishaupt and a strongly pietistic religious policy upset many masons, who felt things in Europe were moving in a direction toward more freedom and toleration, not less. Defections from the order rose until a *silanum* was

declared at the end of 1787, when lodge work was suspended. It would appear that Wöllner's own ambitions had taken precedence over the general welfare of the order.

The Gold- und Rosenkreuzer came to an abrupt halt on April 7, 1792, after what may still be considered a remarkable and impressive existence: "We are withdrawing. We are destroying the building at the same time as we are eliminating the cleft in it" (from an announcement made by the order's superiors in the *Wiener Zeitschrift*).

In the same year as the crown prince's reception into the circles of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen established his second order of high initiates.

The Orden der Ritter und Brüder des Lichts (Order of the Knights and Brothers of the Light) soon changed its name to Die Brüder Sankt Johannes des Evangelisten aus Asien in Europa (the Brothers of St. John the Evangelist from Asia in Europe), or Asiatic Brethren for short. You could say that Eckhoffen was following a trend of masons founding their own orders with their acquired portions of esoteric knowledge.

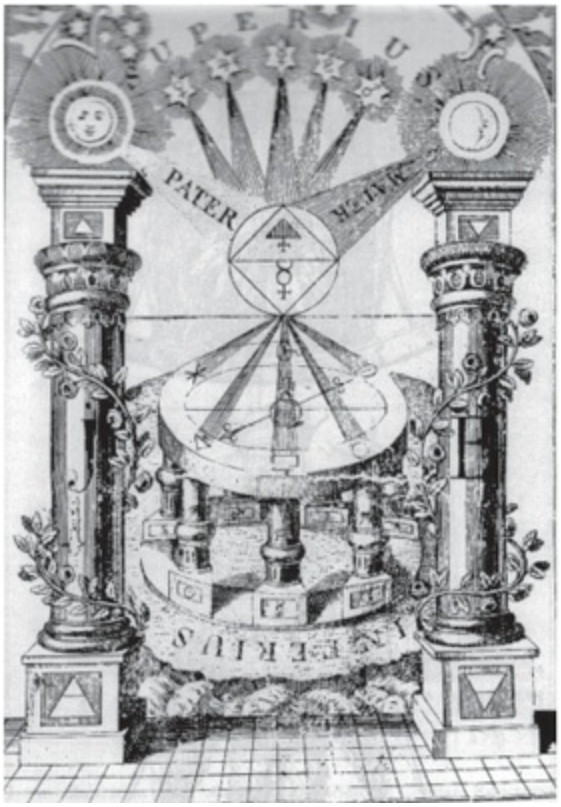
Recruits for the new order came from master masons who wanted to know more about "ultimate secrets" than came from moralizing on the tools of the builders' and architects' trade. One order popped out of another as theosophic, masonic, chivalric Rosicrucians spread like rabbits in a carrot patch. They clearly answered a need, but could they satisfy it?

Eckhoffen's unique selling point was a particularly strong emphasis on kabbalistic knowledge (in vogue with masons at the time in a generally ill-informed manner). Eckhoffen had met a Franciscan monk, an alchemist called Bischof, in Vienna. Bischof had been trained by kabbalists in a Jerusalem monastery, and by one in particular named Asaria, who, as far as Eckhoffen was concerned, took the bona fides of the knowledge available in the order back to the time when the order legend claimed it had been founded, by St. John the Evangelist in AD 40.

Remarkably for the time, Jews were permitted to join, something that upset the Christian Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, a resistance to Humanity that Eckhoffen found risible. Eckhoffen seemed to enjoy having his cake and eating it. The ceremonies had a masonic structure, but like the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, masonic symbols (such as the sun and the moon) were

interpreted alchemically. For example, the masonic Blazing Star was represented as the Aesch-Majim, the “watery fire or fiery water, which we know how to obtain from our substance” and which we may recall from the speculative work of Abraham von Franckenberg discussed in chapter 10.

The fifth grade of the order summoned the candidate to join the company of the Royal Priests and True Rosicrucians (some crossover here, surely, from Pasqually’s system as introduced in Willermoz’s Rectified Scottish Rite). The ceremonies for this grade took place in a room with a throne before a sanctum. There was to be a vessel with myrrh and salt dissolved in water, a golden ox covered with black cloth, and a vessel for the sacred fire.



In this work, *Compass der Weisen* (Compass of the wise), a German Rosicrucian book published in 1779, creation is shown as the work of Aesch (fire) and Majim (water), combined as the “blazing star” in the temples of the Asiatic Brethren: Rosicrucian alchemy fused with masonic furniture and symbolism.

The fire was maintained by seven different fuels and was used to burn an incense blended from ten spices. Seventeen golden pillars were arranged about the room, perhaps for the seven principal heavenly bodies and the ten traditional Sephiroth (or divine emanations) of the kabbalistic Tree of Life.

We can immediately see how the system of the Asiatic Brethren (which encouraged home study of the kabbalistic arts of temurah, notariqon, and gematria) aided the cultural resistance to abstract rationalism.

The kabbalists divided the soul into three parts: *neschamah, ruach*, and *nephesch*. The lowest principle, nephesch, responds to the animal instincts; the middle principle, *ruach*, informs the mind and rational faculties; the highest, *neschamah*, answers to the highest aspirations of the soul and has access to the three highest Sephiroth of God's creative projection of being: *kether* (the crown), *hokmah* (wisdom), and *binah* (understanding).

Reason (*ruach*) alone is not the highest principle of the psyche. It cannot therefore comment unaided on what is beyond its sphere of competence and effectiveness—good for the lower life in its way, it is useless and obstructive for the higher and deeper aspects of human existence. As a consequence, reason rebels, denying the existence of the higher principle. That is why Blake's mythological figure of Urizen is presented in terms of the Gnostics' blind demiurge who, cold and frozen out in self-regarding isolation, declares: "There is no God before me." The strict rationalist to this day is, in my experience, inclined to get very hot under the collar when confronted by the persistence of spiritual philosophy, ranting about "delusions" and "superstitious fantasies."

Eckhoffen drew on the assistance of two Jewish men skilled in Kabbalah. Thomas von Schönfeld and Ephraim Joseph Hirschfeld helped Eckhoffen with the composition of the rituals, designed to express what was supposed to be a continuation of a very old alchemical, theosophical, and magical tradition that had passed through many manifestations, including the Knights Templar.

The Asiatic Brethren attracted an aristocratic membership, which must itself have irritated the ambitions of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer even more. The Gold- und Rosenkreuzer leadership hoped to clean up the Germanic extra-masonic world in its entirety in the course of time after the demise of the Strict Observance. Such jealousies would give rise to some very unfraternal activities among masons pledged to the highest principles of conduct.

Meetings in Vienna were suspended as a result of the Freimaurerapatent of December 11, 1785, which established stricter controls on Masonry at the

behest of the antimasonic convictions of the Roman Catholic Church. Added to this, the Asiatic Brethren also had to suffer the opposition of the masonic Aufklärer and the leaders of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, who also opposed the Aufklärer in a manner that often upset masons otherwise sympathetic to the neo-Rosicrucian pattern of masonic identity.

Eckhoffen needed help (not for the first time), and help duly came in the form of the descendant of the man who had given succor to Raphael Eglin and Michael Maier. Karl, landgrave of Hesse-Kassel (1744–1836), became Grand Master of the Asiatic Brethren in 1786. The landgrave, brother-in-law of Christian VIII, king of Denmark, received instruction from Eckhoffen that involved the invocation of celestial beings. The landgrave was encouraged to use ascetic practices and prayer to awaken his mystical faculties, assisted by specially composed ceremonies.

Initiates of the Asiatic Brethren learned to focus on objects or luminous points as a help in bringing the mind to that state indicated by Christ's dictum "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Aspirants had to lose consciousness of the distracting world and mental debris around them. Clairvoyance would result from assiduous mastery of the exercises—exercises that would be revived within the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn a century later.

During the 1790s, according to historian of the brethren Christine Bergé, Karl of Hesse and other brethren sat around an image of Christ that would light up when invocations were undertaken to acquire answers to specific questions. These phenomena were called "phosphorous manifestations" and are reminiscent of the "passes" familiar to Martinist followers of Pasqually, as well as the contemporary "oracle" of Dom Pernety's Holy Word, about which the ever-alert ears of Jean-Baptiste Willermoz heard through Perisse-Duluc of the Lyon circle of the Rectified Scottish Rite. The Illuminst universe, while practically infinite, was also, from a social point of view, cozily small.

After Eckhoffen's death in 1790, Hirschfeld maintained the widely spread order. According to historian of Western esotericism Antoine Faivre, the legacy of the Asiatic Brethren was twofold. First, the brethren inspired the Golden Dawn, Francesco Brunelli's *Arcana arcanorum* in Italy, and Theodore Reuss's fringe-masonic Ordo Templi Orientis in early-twentieth-

century Germany.

Second, when joined (spuriously) to myths about Weishaupt's Illuminati (see my book *Gnostic Philosophy*), the activities of the Asiatic Brethren became a feature of the polemic of twentieth-century anti-Semites, who have seen both orders as Jewish revolutionary plots that inspired the so-called *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an infamous fabrication announcing an imaginary Jewish-masonic plot to take over the world.

Historian of esoteric societies Massimo Introvigne believes there was some influence of the Asiatic Brethren on Cagliostro's High Egyptian Freemasonry that was such a hit in Paris and London in the years before the French Revolution.[1] The fact is that all these societies influenced one another, since they were all trying to present the ultimate in wisdomoriented fraternities. If such-and-such a group "had something," you had to either provide something like it yourself or complain about it. Thus some Gold- und Rosenkreuzer veiled their anti-Semitism by implying that the Asiatic Brethren had too much Jewish Kabbalah—and must therefore be anti-Christian. Had the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer survived, it may be supposed they would, in due course, have come up with new Kabbalahoriented degrees or home-study teachings.

Like any organization, it had to sell.

ALCHEMY AMONG THE GOLD-UND ROSENKREUZER

There has been a tendency in recent years to suppose that alchemy was a wholly spiritual, psychological, and interior Gnostic discipline. This has arisen largely as a result of Carl Jung's important studies (*viz. Psychology and Alchemy*, 1943).

Jung emphasized the correspondence of alchemical, technical processes to unconscious contents and processes of the psyche, activated, in Jung's view, by contemplation, interiorization, and subsequent projection of the events occurring in the alchemical vases, flasks, aludels, and crucibles. While such an interplay of theory and practice, inner life and outer technique, can hardly be denied in many alchemical texts, the effort to show that there was more to alchemy than turning lead into gold for profit—that is, the now commonplace symbolism that "lead" (base metal) could represent the materialist state of

consciousness and gold the spiritual, perfected state—has obscured the fundamental facts.

That alchemists of the Rosicrucian type believed there was within the human being a hidden stone, a spark of God, a residuum of God's primal will and creative logos, is certain. However, it is just as true to say that they believed such a covert property or properties likewise existed in matter. The hidden stone that could be created by preparation of the correct tincture, purified, refined, and perfected in the laboratory was not for them an imaginary or even purely spiritual substance. The tincture was a gift of God, but it was also substantial and its preparation practically realizable without any necessary overlay of spiritual theory.

Indeed, what appears to have occurred was that belief in theosophical theory intensified with the practice of the alchemical art.

Renko Geffarth's impressive new study of the surviving records of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, now more available since the reunification of Germany and the end of the Iron Curtain, demonstrates that the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer were not dabbling in a spot of symbolic alchemy, otherwise sustained by symbolic writings, rituals, and spiritual exercises.[2] The Gold- und Rosenkreuzer were very serious about the practical application of alchemy.

It should be remembered that the heyday of their movement (the 1780s) was already a century after Elias Ashmole installed a chemical laboratory (with appropriate venting arrangements) in the basement of his famous museum in Broad Street, Oxford. The late eighteenth century was marked by a widespread growth in industrial technology, and in England, by an industrial revolution.

An alchemical laboratory, Georgius Agricola, *De re metallica libri XII . . . animantibus subterraneis liber* . . . , Basel, Froben, 1556. (Courtesy of the Biblioteca Classense, Ravenna.)

The Gold- und Rosenkreuzer were not then pseudo-medieval alchemists buried away in smoky cloisters, messing about in magical drag like mini-Merlins, eyes aflame with romantic vistas of dungeons and dragons. While the movement undoubtedly believed that wisdom was an inheritance of the past, not an asymptote lodged in future states of evolution, it is also true that the process of perfecting alchemical practices was for them a matter of serious concern. They expected to progress in the art, and they saw society as progressing into a golden future insofar as it recovered the ancient wisdom still largely secreted and ignored or misinterpreted in the past. The recovery and revitalization of the “golden age” was their ideal of the future. The dream was actualized in the laboratory.

That the society’s efforts took place in secret may be held against the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer until one realizes the degrees of secrecy that still accompany advanced scientific labor. The *ergon* (work) of the state- or big corporation–funded scientist may be a new missile defense system, but its *parergon* (or by-product) may turn up at your local electrical-goods store,

accompanied by a magazine and website culture and the promise of greater things to come.

To some extent, the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer shared the Martinist dream of a superelite that governed and sustained society for its own good, but the doors of the elite were nonetheless open to people of many backgrounds, leavened and leveled by the doctrines of Freemasonry. Talent would out (in theory).

Nevertheless, the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer system was a hierarchical brotherhood; and, as we shall see, it takes only heavy-handedness at the top to wreck completely a system that ought in theory to flow upward. The stifling of initiative by bureaucratic consciousness, pretentious selfglorification, control-freakery, and power-tripping in the governing body destroys many a system. Democratic accountability, though noisome, is vital for a healthy body; the individual is sovereign. Democratic accountability did not exist among the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer any more than many believe it exists in the offices of the European Union's bureaucracy today. All bureaucracies could learn from the fate of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer—but then, bureaucracies seldom learn.

Renko Geffarth's analysis of the order's canonical writings, order letters, and alchemical instructions has revealed the surprising picture of Gold- und Rosenkreuzer practicing communal alchemical operations in the order's own laboratories. Instructional recipes made available to the Minores, Majores, Adepti exempti, and Magistri were intended for the production of the Stone of the Wise (or Philosopher's Stone).

This Stone was usually conceived of as a powder whose catalytic properties could raise substances to their highest degree of perfection, liberating the divine energy secreted within. (We now know that transmutation of elements is possible under exact conditions and in the presence of highly toxic and radioactive radium; the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer were not aware of the modern system of elements and worked on a Paracelsian system of three elements: sulfur, salt, and mercury, combined with the old Aristotelian system of earth, air, fire, and water.)

Each group of Gold- und Rosenkreuzer was given a task, or Work. The degree of difficulty of the task reflected the advanced nature of the grade. In this sense, the transmutation of the adept was held as a spiritual process in

line with the production of the Stone of the Wise.

The Stone might well turn out to be more a matter of a conscious realization marking spiritual growth than the actual production of the physical stone. The realization of the inner was as dependent (in theory) on success in the outer as the reverse, on the Hermetic principle of “As above, so below.” The worlds of spirit and matter were necessarily (if temporarily) integrated. In this understanding, the essentially Gnostic character of the order may be seen.

Spirit must be freed from the consequences of the Fall into matter. Spirit must attain self-realization; then mastery of nature should properly follow: the souls of the metals will obey the Word according to which they themselves received their primary formation. It was important to recover and learn the secret language of nature, the primal knowledge of Adam in Paradise.

The name given to the whole process was the familiar term of the Magnum Opus, the Great Work, beginning with the *materia prima* (the first matter), whose refinement in step processes was to create a material that could perfect all material.

The cosmos was a miracle that contained a fundamental miracle: the human being’s ability to comprehend and transcend it, only possible on the human’s reintegration into his or her pristine nature through the expansion of inner knowledge by the radiance of the spirit.

There was no doubt that gold could be produced by the agency of the Stone, but this was not recommended, in tune with the ideals of the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*. It was strongly recommended that adepts think primarily in terms of producing the universal medicine, the golden medicine, or “elixir of life.”

The steps consisted of a sequence of colorings, beginning with the black (*nigredo*), symbolic of the characterlessness of *materia prima;* then the white (*albedo*), symbolic of purification and the production of alchemical silver; the yellow (*citrinitus*), from which alchemical gold should arise; and finally the red (*rubedo*), from whose production should result the Stone of the Wise or Stone of Wisdom.

These coloring steps were enacted by a series of laboratory procedures,

among which were the *solutio* (melting or dissolution), *putrefactio* (transformation of material by rotting or fermentation), and *fixatio* (solidification through distillation or crystallization, leaving a residue). At the end of the Great Work was the *projectio*: the utilization of the Stone on a material that had to be perfected. This was the *ergon*, the Work, but there was also the *parergon* or by-product; laboratory procedures and interim products could also be used for other purposes, such as pharmacologically active substances.

The processes were accompanied by close reading of texts that bore attractive, rich, symbolic illustrations that both challenged and illuminated the operators. The recipes themselves were usually written in a multiplicity of signs that represented equipment, substances, or their characteristics. It is rarely possible to decipher these recipes unambiguously, due to the presence of symbolic conditions mixed with substantial ones.

Again, difficulties of interpretation should not lead us to think that the processes were ideal or fanciful. Practical realization of the degree texts of the order required major commitments. Laboratories had to be created with ovens, retorts, distillation apparatus, tools, chemicals, crucibles. Special budgets were created within the circles for the purpose; these were significant technical operations. They were re-creating the conditions believed to have once flourished in Egypt's golden age, when every temple had an alchemical furnace and every priest was an adept.

The order looked well on a *direktor* or *frater* of a circle who was well off or who already had equipment or suitable accommodation for the installation of equipment, the whereabouts of which had to be maintained as an order secret.

There was always the very real danger of poisoning. Flammable, corrosive substances were in regular use, never mind the open fires and ovens, often employed through the night for weeks at a time. One can hardly avoid thinking of the contemporaneous activities at Abraham Darby's smelting works at Blists Hill and Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire, or of Joseph Priestly's laboratory in Birmingham, activities that made many feel decidedly uneasy about the forces that humans had brought under often unsteady rein.

Reports have survived in order documents of accidents in the laboratories and of experiments gone wrong. In the laboratory of Berlin Circle Direktor

Johann Christian Anton Theden, for example, in the successful processing of an antimony tincture, two people lost their lives. Such reports demonstrate the sensitivity of this central aspect of the order's operations, helping us see why candidates with appropriate expertise were made especially welcome.

Experienced laboratory operators were received without having to pay induction fees; they could help the circle to success or at least help prevent procedural errors and dangerous accidents. Membership lists duly noted experienced lab practitioners or whether members had, before induction, dabbled in chemistry. The order thus liked to attract doctors and apothecaries with their valuable capabilities, as well as cognoscenti of alchemical processes whose modes of earning a living were often widely distinct from their deeper interests.

For example, the Leipzig stocking-maker Christian Heinrich Wiche was counted as a "good manipulator," while Lieutenant Hartmann Ludwig August von Witzleben of the Saxen-Weimar Regiment was noted for having read philosophical books and indulged in chemical manipulation. We should not know these persons' skills from their profession alone. The order soon put such skills to use. Thus, Hilarion (the spiritual name of the Berlin Circle's "manipulant," Johann Gottfried Jugel), with his wide knowledge in physics, chemistry, and mining, was also the author of numerous order writings on metallurgy and alchemy.

Another highly competent Rosicrucian manipulant was Johann Georg Schlögel. He was a well-trained apothecary and writer of works on theoretical and practical chemistry. He was therefore treated as a "brother in service" of the Prague Circle Taurus, with appropriate tasks and duties.

Completed alchemical processes were distinguished by great complexity of procedure, not helped by problems of comprehension involved in the instructions. There was thus a lively correspondence between laboratory operators and the order superiors who wished to test results and offer encouragement to greater exertions by providing additional teaching.

Geffarth has also observed how the investigation of recipes and subsequent refinement of technique led not only to lengthy process sequences but also to activities very close to the word *experiment* in the Baconian orthodox scientific sense. The word *experiment* received its order definition within the instruction text of the eighth grade. An "experiment" consisted of countless

“handshakes,” extensive repetition, the intensive employment of work materials, chemicals, and, above all, time. Patience was a virtue. This was not the testing of a theory or hypothesis (since the hypothesis was absolute: alchemical Truth *worked*), but an experience to go through. Thus, the Work was an experiment in the original sense in which Roger Bacon and John Dee had used the word: a means of gaining practical experience directly, in both an outer sense (acquiring knowledge through refinement) and an inner sense. (Dee called this branch of science Archemastrie, or mastery.)

The inner sense involved experiencing the truth and meaning of what otherwise would remain only a system of signs without experiential reception of the thing signified. However, pursued assiduously and consciously, the approach necessarily involved the limited Baconian sense of testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions in conformity with actual, measurable test results, sometimes resulting in actual discoveries, not of general laws but of novel and useful formulas and substances.

There were important psychological considerations, as with any form of intense concentration. The Work, or Arbeit, as they called it, was a long-drawn-out endeavor; it was a spiritual and physical endurance process. The nature of alchemy, where individual processes had to be maintained according to propitious astrological conditions so that maximum “ray effects” and appropriate climatic conditions could assist mutations, might go on for months with results uncertain, right up to the final moment. This discipline was not compared to climbing a mountain for nothing! The Gold- und Rosenkreuzer would surely have warmed to Rodgers and Hammerstein’s famous song on the theme.

As a result of the time required and the material costs involved in mounting an alchemical operation, involvement with practical alchemy accounted for a huge part of Rosicrucian commitment. The idea of *work, work, work* would characterize all orders inspired by the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, who must have exhausted themselves in their tasks. But was all this an impossible dream, quixotic and ultimately hopeless?

Readers may be astonished to find that this condemnation, put about largely by nineteenth-century propagandists of materialist science, is not borne out by the extant evidence.

Correspondence gives us only a glimpse of what actually took place, but in

some instances that glimpse is sufficient for a transformed idea of what the work of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer made possible.

Correspondence between the Hauptdirektor of the Dresden Circle, François du Bosc, and his superiors, Oberhauptdirektor Orion and the society's Oberhauptdirektor Johann Christoph Wöllner, is particularly revealing in this respect. In this valuable original correspondence, analyzed by Renko Geffarth, we find that while the Stone of the Wise eluded the Dresden operators, a unique medicine was nonetheless produced and developed as a commercial success within the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer society.

Du Bosc corresponded regularly with Orion about progress with his equipment, of which Orion demonstrated more understanding than his successor, Wöllner, who was largely embroiled in his activities and ambitions around the crown prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. Wöllner was less impressed than Orion by what du Bosc and his team had achieved.

Du Bosc soon got into the habit of informing only Wöllner of his successes, whereas he had formerly sent Orion detailed inquiries and reports. Orion continued to receive these even after Wöllner succeeded him as Oberhauptdirektor.

Assisted by his experienced "brother in science" Johann Gottfried Steinert (who served as guinea pig for the quality-testing of the medicines), du Bosc, zealous and always keen to expand his knowledge, had noted Brother Hettagon (Steinert) at the latter's raising to the eighth grade. He wrote in a letter to Orion that Brother Hettagon's knowledge of the grade was so perfect that he could not amaze himself enough when considering it.

Sadly, no laboratory protocols survive from du Bosc's and Seinert's collaboration, but progress and setback in experiments were reported duly and in detailed precision to their superiors. Both men were enthusiastic experimenters, not only executing the order's official procedures but also following the prescriptions of other writers, occasionally pioneering their own routes to the production of significant products. For them, the Goldund Rosenkreuzer were opening a door not only to adeptship but to genuine entrepreneurial management as well.

Not surprisingly, such initiative in the order came up against the hierarchical structure, expressed in bureaucratic hurdles that each had to be overcome in turn. Before an alchemical operation could be set up, a detailed

sketch or proposal of the mode of procedure had to be dispatched to the superiors. The superiors wanted to know everything. If one of their circles was going to produce a portion of the Stone, they wanted to know about it, of course. Only when the superiors had signaled their agreement to the operation and rubber-stamped its practicality regarding method could the Work begin. The time between announcement of intention and official reply could be frustratingly protracted. The nature of bureaucracy involves an implicit establishment of authority, not simply the means of facilitation. Power requires its subjects to wait without demur.

Weighty correspondence in this process has survived between Oberdirektor Carl Rudolf von Lestwitz in Glogau in Silesia in August 1781 and his inferior in the order Johann Christof Andreas Meyer, leader of a circle in Frankfurt an der Oder. Meyer was instructed that he must attempt to acquire a laboratory-work permission statement, as well as a "Special Instruction" before beginning an operation. Lestwitz promised Meyer that he would support his application. After that, Meyer would have to develop a proposal and then send that in, whereon, if successful, he would receive in due course a *specialissimam instructionem* and permission to proceed with the planned process. A few years later, Meyer did endeavor to secure such permission.

Wöllner sent a letter to Dresden Hauptdirektor du Bosc—who stood above both Lestwitz and Meyer—indicating positive approval for a plan of Meyer's sent through the Grand Priory. Thus, the upper echelons of the order always knew what was cooking in the circles below them.

It is clear that the permissions structure did not prevent du Bosc's and Seinert's activities, though it did slow them down. Du Bosc knew that his primary goal of producing the universal medicine was intended to be a step toward the production of the Stone of the Wise, but he had his eye strongly on the achievement of marketable medicine. In November 1781, du Bosc reported that the "lye" (sodium hydroxide—an elemental "sauce") had succeeded well—"and the saltpetre is indeed fine"; he wrote, "The *electrum* has been provided with all seven metals and is now making the detonations."

Seinert did most of the on-site lab work, while du Bosc awaited results longingly. At an early stage, to preempt later delay in the process, du Bosc felt impelled to consult in detail with the Oberhauptdirektor as to whether he

would have to send a third of the tincture to the High Command, as was laid down for testing purposes, as he required it for the production of his health and the strengthening of his spirit. Du Bosc did not want to await test results but was eager to consume the medicine immediately for his own good.

While the Dresden Circle did not discover the Universal Medicine, the process of seeking it led to extremely successful production of pharmacologically effective substances. Du Bosc was delighted to report that he was now in possession of "microcosmic tincture," a "substance exceptionally beloved in the order" that had reached its highest possible point of perfectibility and had already healed a woman after a heavy and dangerous miscarriage that had left her very weak and in a state of high fever. The tincture had also cured du Bosc himself of toothache. The product seemed of very extensive applicability.

Du Bosc, an experienced merchant, was also a member of the Saxen Electoral Cabinet, and recognized early on the commercial value of products arising from the circle. He not only sent in the obligatory medicine description and samples for quality-testing, but also provided price details, target markets, and purposes and detailed expense budgets associated with systematic production.

As a member of a spiritual order, he then made it clear in a letter to Orion that he did not seek financial benefits for himself—"as poor as we might be there is not the slightest desire for gold in us" (tell that to the pharmaceutical corporations!). He did, however, expect costs to be covered. When sending a glass of the quintessence of the "three natural realms" (presumably animal, vegetable, and mineral), the *tinctura macrocosmi*, to his superior, Wöllner, du Bosc made him aware that "the price of an entire portion including the glass vial is twelve thaler."

The product was especially costly, as it also contained "gold and antimony tincture." This was produced after the Gualisch process, a difficult process often involving the loss of the material (formulated by Federico Gualdi, *fl.* 1704, Parma, Italy). Du Bosc added further, "We currently have no *auro-potabile* [drinkable gold] in store because it is a difficult and costly medicine. A vial like this one which contains the quintessence costs 14 ducats if it consists of the seven metals but if *ex aurolo*—seven thaler [dollars]."

There were then two products available of "drinkable gold," as well as the

macrocosmic tincture and an antimonial tincture. Drinkable gold was a highly valued medicine in alchemy. Many alchemical recipes for producing it had been handed down in which the dissolution of metallic gold and the production of essences from it were described. As to which recipe was employed by the Dresden Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, we do not know, but the antimonial tincture was made according to Federico Gualdi's recipe.

Convinced of their medicine's quality, du Bosc and Steinert offered it to Wöllner for sale. Seldom content with their works, they made all efforts to improve recipes in an experimental manner. Du Bosc reported to Wöllner his ideas for perfecting the macrocosmic tincture: "Dissatisfied with the quintessence from three natural realms I have come down on the side of creating a true, universal quintessence. That is to say, the three natural realms, the golden sulphur and the astral spirit to be added to it, which would be a thoroughly grand and powerful medicine."

This was not, presumably, *the* universal medicine. Had they achieved that, they would already traditionally have been able to make the Stone of the Wise. Nevertheless, after production of the improved macrocosmic tincture had been completed, du Bosc assured the vice generalship of the society, to whom he sent a portion for testing: "We do not flatter ourselves that becoming superior to other brothers working at our grade has been easy. So highly have we achieved with the macrocosmic tincture, the universal quintessence, there is united within it the highest with the lowest, because we have added the astral spirit to it and strengthened your triple sulphur with gold sulphur *ex antimonia*."

Wöllner (Oberhauptdirektor) now described the *tinctura macrocosmi concentrata* as unimprovable: high praise indeed. Among the tincture's therapeutic effects were now included an ability to cure measles and gonorrhea. It was held to be the most reliable medicine against fevers, "in all cases of great assistance." It was also used in treating injuries, having already cured a head wound incurred by Steinert's four-year-old daughter.

Frustratingly, perhaps, in the absence of detailed laboratory protocols, Geffarth has been unable to determine the precise constituents of the products of the Dresden alchemical laboratory. The tincture might, he deduces from the available documentation, have consisted of some means of combining ingredients as mundane (to us) as a watery solution of chalk and hydrogen

potassium tartrate (rather like baking powder). Such a recipe has been found in rudimentary form, but whether it was at the root of Steinert and du Bosc's labor in the laboratory is unknown.

It is certainly the case that the results of their work came very close to the product description of a universal medicine, with additional benefits to its employability, such as lack of toxic side effects. Patients on whom it was tested suffered no damage from it. They were fortunate that the product was tested first on Steinert, the laboratory guinea pig.

On one memorable occasion in the lab, Steinert was struck with pains in the lungs and shortness of breath, possibly from toxicosis as a result of inhalation of fumes (a well-known risk of the Work). Du Bosc gave him some of the tincture, resulting in a "great laxative effect," vomiting, and stinking perspiration. Three days later, he was fit and well again. After this possible setback, the two men redoubled their efforts and could soon report the quintessence had reached higher levels, and was now more effective, stronger, and more fiery: "In this new form it is also more truly universal in respect of its ten constituent parts; twenty of its actions on all temperaments, cases and illnesses, because we have added to it the soul of all seven metals. Whatever the influence may be at work in the patient, the quintessence will always prove superior to whatever is afflicting the patient."

Such is the record of Gold- und Rosenkreuzer's alchemical medicine, good for the spirits and the spirit—and not a little surprising.

SOCIAL IDEALISM

In 1989 I made a film for Dutch TV called *The New Age and the New Man*. Curiously, within a short time the phrase "new age" entered the popular British vocabulary as synonymous with "new age traveler," a kind of media stereotype for neo-hippy/alternatives living in mobile accommodation and holding neopagan spiritual beliefs. Meanwhile, the expression "new man" appeared to mean no more than the mundane concept of a "feminized" male who respected the feminist movement's evaluations of women's status and men's shortcomings.

The "new age" of my title was, of course, the golden age prophesied in Rosicrucian-style writings, an age of spiritual recovery of the authentic

doctrine of humankind, while the “new man” was the spiritually regenerated being who had been returned to his primal, Adamic status with God as his center.

Words do not always mean what they say, and media and political distortion of language distorts reality—and is intended to.

The film *The New Age and the New Man* dealt primarily with the story of the Rosicrucians. Early on in the film, Dr. Christopher McIntosh was interviewed as to the dominant ideas that motivated the four-hundred-year-old phenomenon.

The true dimensions of Dr. McIntosh’s statements did not strike me until fairly recently. He said in the film that all Gnostics were concerned with a process of “finding our way out of the physical realm” into the spiritual or divine realm: “And the way back is secret; not everybody knows about it. The Rosicrucians believed that they had the secret, the *gnosis*; they knew the way back.”

The fullness of this knowledge had, according to Rosicrucians, been in the possession of Adam, the first archetype of humanity, before the Fall. The Fall had fatally distorted the balance of divine creative energies so that human beings’ perceptions were now dominated by material perception, and nature began to work against them, keeping them in its thrall. They had, as it were, “lost their Dignity.”

The Rosicrucians aimed at restoring this primitive dignity—humanity’s miraculous but occluded nature—and thereby reintegrate humankind back to where it belonged, as lord of two worlds that must be made One.

The knowledge remained as a spark or “stone” within human beings that had to be worked on and brought into full remembrance and consciousness. The world rendered them unconscious. Earthy humans are dead, dead to the (true) world. They must be raised from the dead. Thus, in Andreae’s dream sequence at the beginning of *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz*, the feminine angel comes to C.R. “in his sleep” or unconscious state, even though he might appear awake to his ordinary mind. Her message then manifests in his nighttime dream. There is an interpenetration of worlds; he must follow *her* back, out of the hellhole of darkness and human madness. She, of course, is Wisdom, Sophia. She shows the way back. She is the goddess-angel of the Rosicrucians.

She knows.

There is a persistent tradition in Rosicrucian writings wherein the spiritual aspirant must learn to embrace “his Sophia.” In the writings of Guillaume Postel and in certain French heterodox Catholic orders, this process involves an actual relationship with “the Woman,” even a mutual self-giving in spiritual and physical union. The Woman may be the woman known as Mary Magdalene regarding whom there is a now famous suppressed tradition of her experiencing an intimate relationship with the living Jesus. She may be the “heavenly Sophia” who comes to Earth to redeem the children of the Light. She may be found in the “dream-angel” of the romantic. She helps heal the rift that separates man-as-he-is from man-as-he-should-be. He must be willing, and strong, for flesh is weak. She brings “healing in her wings.”

She brings love, and that love means service, “washing the feet” of Christ in all human beings, caring for the meanest. It is a distortion of Gnostic traditions that the Gnostic *qua* Gnostic is a selfish person, concerned solely with getting out of this world as quickly as possible, engaged in a solo flight from the alone to the alone.

This is certainly not a feature of what has come to be called Rosicrucianism, which, in the eighteenth century, would come to be seen not only as an incidence of the transhistorical *gnosis*, but also as a collective identity for the ancient tradition in its entirety. Without the *gnosis*, or rose, the cross would remain barren. Thus the rose blooming on the barren cross was taken as an iconographic symbol of the transforming *gnosis* as a metahistorical whole. The union of the rose and the cross represents the male and female principles reunited in their highest possible aspect: love and sacrifice, surrender of the world, surrender of the central place of self, where the self rejoices in giving, dwelling in divine providence, freed from the destiny determined by the stars and the lord of the stars, the false god, identified with or working through the rebellious, self-centred ego.

The rose and the cross represent together the flowering of wisdom and the spiritual blood of the Redeemer or Réparateur. The rose and the cross represent the reunion or reintegration of humankind with God, the return from barren hell to the rich life of spiritual paradise. In the image of the rose and the cross is the symbol of humanity’s highest destiny, the divine secret par excellence, everywhere to be seen, but seen by few.

This realization that the graceful reintegration of the human being into the fullness of God must be manifested in acts of love and service was not an invention of eighteenth-century neo-Rosicrucians. Service of humanity was a sign that reintegration and spiritual regeneration were taking place. It was the *parergon* or by-product of the Great Work. Amelioration of social suffering (conscious and unconscious) was not the *purpose* of the Great Work—for *the poor are with us always*—it was a necessary by-product of the Great Work, and a sign of spiritual progress both in the individual and in society (the same remark could be made of new discoveries in science and technology).

The true Rosicrucian Brother scatters gold dust wherever he goes, on the principle that all that glitters is not gold. The power of transformation lies in the divinely enlightened imagination that may turn a stable manger into the throne of a king. Those who give it away are wise; those who hoard their treasure are truly fools, the poorest of the poor.

We find the idea of social service made very plain in Andreae's works outlining the Fraternity of Christ, written between 1614 and 1630. One of the means of serving humanity, indicated as a work of Andreae's Christian Society, was the production and distribution of helpful books to form an encyclopedia. The collective contents would show how all created things point to God and our ultimate destiny. We saw this expression of service put directly into practice by Comenius, by an association of English Hermetic philosophers during the 1650s, and we see it over a century later in Russia, in the life of Nikolay Ivanovich Novikov (1744–1818) and his remarkably talented, and willing, friends.

NIKOLAY IVANOVICH NOVIKOV

After being expelled from Moscow University's French College for repeated absence, Nikolay Ivanovich Novikov (1744–1818) joined the army. In 1762, his Izmailovskij Regiment took part in the putsch that brought the empress Catherine II to the Russian throne.

Catherine set up a legal committee to look at Russia's most pressing social and political questions; Novikov worked as secretary to the committee. Liberal reforms were instituted in 1767. A year later, Novikov retired from the guard, armed with experience and a vision of Russia's problems as a

whole, and set up a series of satirical magazines that had the temerity to challenge the empress's own official magazine, *Vsiakaja vsiatchina* (All sorts and sundries); the empress edited it herself.

Novikov began searching for the "true" Freemasonry after an initial initiation into the English system lodge Urania, in 1775. This search led him toward chivalric, mystical, and alchemical Masonry, influenced by German Freemason George von Reichel (member of the "To the three golden keys" lodge in Berlin, and a teacher at the St. Petersburg Military School).

Between 1777 and 1785, Novikov launched a series of successful masonic magazines, one of which was the most widely distributed periodical in eighteenth-century Russia, *Utrennij Svet* (The morning light; 1777–80).

A decree of the empress in 1783 allowed Novikov to establish his own private book-publishing company, the Typographic Company, from out of his Friendly Scientific Society, which he ran with I. G. Schwartz, the regional supervisor of the Russian branch of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, which he helped found in 1782. Schwartz was also a member of the ideologically syncretistic Lodge Harmony, founded in Moscow in 1780 by Schwartz, Novikov, and N. Troubezkoy to harmonize moral and spiritual masonic traditions.

Belonging to different rites, the men of Novikov's circle shared an ideal of enlightenment. This enlightenment represented a union between faith and reason, or science and religion, being "a path towards moral and spiritual self-improvement as human beings, patriots and Christians."[3]

The aim, as Novikov wrote in the first issue of *The Morning Light*, was "to aspire to touch the very soul of our co-citizens." The transformation and raising of the whole of Russian society was envisioned, through which effort the individual would encounter spiritual transfiguration or "transmutation." Concentration on the genuine spiritual initiation of the individual would necessarily illuminate society as a whole; all were called to service. As the dynamic gained in strength, the individual would benefit society and society would benefit the individual, so long, that is, as *the transcendent goal remained primary*. A merely earthbound social idealism would not only fail as a system (since it ignored the full account of human nature) but would in due course also obliterate the very soul that first motivated it, as every attempt to institute secular and atheistic communism or democratic socialism

has clearly, and violently, demonstrated.

Novikov and Johann Georg Schwartz, together with I. P. Turgenev and Rosicrucian I. P. Lopuchin, were interested in very large-scale social and educational initiatives. The extraordinary Typographical Company, for example, came to control five publishing houses, together responsible for over a third of all books published in Russia during the period of Novikov's activity—an astonishing achievement resulting in some 950 book titles.

Books published under their aegis included many classics and new works of the entire pietistic, alchemical, Renaissance Hermetic, Rosicrucian, Behmenist, Martinist, and other Illuminist traditions. The translated works of, for example, Arnold, Weigel, Paracelsus, Arndt, Fludd, and Böhme—as well as works on the arts and sciences by Gellert, Wieland, von Kleist, Gessner, Bacon, Erasmus, Montesquieu, Plato, Plutarch, and Seneca—had an enormous effect on Russian thought, an effect eyed jealously by the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, which began to question whether so much foreign material should be available to Russian Christians (their territory).

Those who opposed the Russian Freemasons, Rosicrucians, Martinists, Behmenists, and members of the Rectified Scottish Rite (Novikov was a member of the Chevaliers Bienfaisants de la Cité Sainte) suggested that masonic contacts between people of different states encouraged spying and laxity of patriotic fervor. The empress was encouraged to think that such widespread private initiatives, beyond her control, betokened an internationalist masonic conspiracy, regardless of any social benefits.

While Novikov and his fellow Rosicrucian Freemasons were out on the streets during the famine of 1787, distributing poor relief while also maintaining a hospital and apothecary shop for the poor, the state secret police were busy poring through the letters and documentation seized from inspections and closure of masonic lodges during the previous year. The police were particularly interested in connections with Berlin; Prussia was at the time deemed a threat to Russian state interests.

It was only a matter of time before they uncovered correspondence between the Russian Gold- und Rosenkreuzer and the Oberhauptdirektor of the order, Wöllner. In 1786, Novikov (supervisor of the Russian order since Schwartz's death in 1784) had complained to Wöllner about order members not receiving secrets for which they had already paid, a scandalous situation

that contributed to a gathering rot in the order.

As far as the Russian authorities were concerned, Wöllner was an undesirable foreign body. He held a position of great influence with the crown prince of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm, and was already planning the Prussian religious policy (strictly Lutheran, guided covertly by the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer) that he would put into practice as head of the Prussian Department of Religion in 1788. Wöllner could hardly be considered an ally of Russian interests. How could it be seemly for a Russian gentleman to defer to such a one?

In fact, the Russian masonic and Rosicrucian movements did not offer de facto slavish obedience to German authority; after the Wilhelmsbad Masonic Conference of 1782, Russia gained considerable independence as the Seventh Province of autonomous masonic jurisdiction, subject to the common rules applicable to all members regardless of nationality. This proviso made little impression on police suspicions. Were not the cries of “Fraternity” and “Humanity” a blatant slap in the face to the exclusive allegiances of monarch, nation, and creed?

Suspicion turned to paranoia after the French Revolution began in 1789. The execution of King Louis XVI (by guillotine), the sudden death of the emperor Leopold II of Austria in 1792, and the murder of King Gustav III of Sweden shortly after (all blamed by hysterical opinion on Freemasons) were felt very deeply by the empress, who feared for her own position; bloodshed in the Kremlin was nothing new. The police showed the empress correspondence between the Russian Rosicrucians and the Prussian Wöllner. They urged action be taken against all masons, Rosicrucians, and Illuminists. They could add to the case the fact that at the end of 1787, the Prussians Wöllner and von Bischoffswerder had declared a complete Silence or *silanum* in the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer order, in an attempt to recover a declining situation. Lodge work officially suspended, the order was now proceeding in even greater secrecy.

Furthermore, as the police were only too happy to maintain, a number of Russian lodges owed institutional obedience (by oath) to foreign masonic jurisdictions. Novikov was one of those to whom Wöllner had addressed his secret correspondence, and Novikov was perceived as being not only too powerful in society, but also the most authoritative Freemason in Russia.

How could he be trusted? Illuminism was an affront to the state *and* the church!

In 1792, Novikov and three of his closest collaborators were arrested. Publishing houses were closed and books were seized. The arrested men were accused of secret exchanges with Prussian officials, of having sworn allegiance to the duke of Braunschweig (patron of the Rectified Scottish Rite), and of spreading heretical teachings condemned by the Russian Orthodox Church. They had, in short, shown disloyalty to the person of the empress and were sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

Novikov was released four and a half years later, on the first day of the accession of Catherine's son, Paul I, who was sympathetic to the theocratic ideas of the Martinists and the Rosicrucians. The tsar had liked the idea of Novikov's 1783 novel, *Chysomander*, which featured a magusking called Hyperion who used alchemy to relieve the hardship of his subjects. That such was indeed a practical possibility had been proved by the Prussian Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, as we have seen.

Novikov had promoted the idea of the Holy Tsar, mediator between heaven and Earth, believing that the prince should be a mystical initiate drawing on spiritual and supernatural virtues, sanctified by the Inner Church, as outlined in the remarkably communicative works of the Roman Catholic Hermetic philosopher Karl von Eckartshausen (1752–1802), among others. These ideas would strongly influence Paul I's successor, Tsar Alexander I. Tsar Alexander was very fond of von Eckartshausen's works and popularized them in Russia, especially after Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in 1812—an act the tsar saw as a miracle of divine grace.

Novikov himself never resumed his public activities and died in 1818. Six years later, after twelve years of openness to the mystico-gnostic cause, the tsar encountered the direct declaration of the Archimandrite Photius of the Russian Orthodox Church that the "new religion" of Illuminism was a plot of the Antichrist and a fomenter of revolution. The tsar was forced into a political conformity with orthodox conservatism against his higher judgment.

Nevertheless, the efforts of Novikov and his circle had lasting influence. In the spiritual transformation of Russian citizens, and in the call to a higher social destiny, the Rosicrucians laid the foundations for the blossoming of Russian culture in the nineteenth century.

SIXTEEN

THE AGE OF PROGRESS

The so-called Age of Progress (the nineteenth century) was full of people who looked to the past to earn themselves a future. Nevertheless, ideas from the past have a remarkable habit of turning up time and time again, not always in particularly novel guises. So often is this the case that one might come to the conclusion that most "progress" is simply a matter of externals. Things change; they look different. Man might have furnished himself with the thought that he is, as far as the planet goes, now making a real qualitative difference (for the worse), but in himself, we see the same old Man. It is the "same old Man" that we find in the story of Rosicrucianism, and it is the "same old Man" who is addressed by the doctrines associated with Rosicrucianism.

The same old Man tends to be attracted to the same old doctrines—or, dare we say—heresies.

BERNARD-RAYMOND FABRÉ-PALAPRAT

Bernard-Raymond Fabré-Palaprat (1773–1838) may be described as the founder of modern neo-Templarism. This seems an odd thing to call it. How could neo-Templarism, based on veneration of a monastic-chivalric order from the past, be called modern? I think it must mean that he brought together a certain kind of Templarism (the Strict Observance had been superseded by the Beneficent Knights of the Holy City after 1782) that had its own fringe beliefs and emphases, and from which certain extant Templarist groups derive today. Other than that, there is not much that is modern about the movement generated by the curious exertions of Fabré-

Palaprat. However, if we use the word modern in its strict sense, as meaning "fashionable," there may be something in Fabré-Palaprat's creations to whet the appetite of today's mystic roué. Why mention them, then, in a book on the Rosicrucians?

We do so because this style of Templarism influenced some latenineteenth-century and twentieth-century groups that also regard the blend of red-cross knight chivalry and mysticism as being distinctly Rosicrucian, regardless of any interest in the seventeenth-century movement.

Fabré-Palaprat was, after the Revolution, a member of the Lodge of the Knight of the Cross in Paris. In 1804, together with some of his masonic brothers, he claimed to have discovered by chance documents connected with the survival of the Knights Templar after their suppression by the pope in 1312. This story may seem more than familiar to those who have read *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1982) and other works, and I suspect that this connection is not simply coincidental.

The significant documents were (allegedly) found in the furniture of Duke Louis-Hercule-Timoléon de Cossé-Brissac, who had been killed by Republicans during the French revolutionary Terror in 1792. The documents claimed the duke as the last grand master from an unbroken line of descent going back to Jacques de Molay, the Templar Grand Master burned to death in Paris in 1314. The documents duly authorized masonic bodies to elect a new grand master in the event of his death. Fabré-Palaprat of the Knight of the Cross Lodge had himself elected as grand master by his lodge in 1805.

For a while, the lodge prospered in its new role as center of the "true" Order of the Temple. Even Emperor Napoleon I (1769–1821) presided over a solemn ceremony at the lodge in 1808. However, this was by no means enough for Fabré-Palaprat. He had other ideas about the true destiny awaiting him.

Providence furnished him, he said, with the discovery of more documents —this time purchased from a Parisian *bouquiniste* in 1812. These documents consisted of an alleged "original" Gospel of John, called the Evangelicon, and a commentary on the text called the Levitikon. It is disputed whether Fabré-Palaprat forged them; they may have been seventeenth- or eighteenth-century forgeries. Fabré-Palaprat was in no doubt that these documents were authentic scripture; he eagerly embraced what they had to tell him. Not

surprisingly, they could have been composed for him personally.

Apparently, Jesus Christ was not the son of God but a kindly old esoteric master educated in Alexandria (where the Gnostics came from). Before dying, this Jesus founded an Order of the East with secret authority over the Church of the West—the Catholic Church of Rome. The order's first Grand Master was John the Beloved, and every fringe masonic order, just as much as mainstream masonic orders, likes to hear the name "John." John the Beloved knew something the other disciples—especially Peter, who went to Rome—did not.

This relationship would be a conceit of some modern Templarist orders thereafter.

Then, in a move uncannily reminiscent of the famous Priory of Sion narrative, the Order of the East became the Order of the Temple, or Knights Templar, in the Middle Ages.

Fabré-Palaprat wasted no time thinking out the implications (or checking his sources); destiny was clear. He claimed apostolic authority over the whole of Christianity and effectively established a new religion, the Johannite Church—various incarnations of which will be familiar to students of fringe Freemasonry in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (As Leonardo da Vinci painted an amazing portrait of John the Baptist—often confused with John the Evangelist in masonic circles—could he not also have been privy to the extraordinary secret? I ask this only to tease.)

Fabré-Palaprat became Supreme Pontiff of John's Church over Peter's Church. Predictably, schism followed between the Johannite and Catholic sections of his order of the Temple. His followers represented the most anticlerical Freemasons.

In 1831, Fabré-Palaprat met a defrocked priest, Ferdinand-François Châtel (1795–1857), who founded an anticlericalist and socialist French Catholic Church. He was consecrated primate of the French Johannite Church, after which the Johannite Church quickly collapsed.

Fabré-Palaprat died in Pau, in the Pyrenees, in 1838. After his death, the Palapratian and Catholic wings of the neo-Templar order attempted a merger with British Admiral William Sydney-Smith, the Grand Prior for England. Both sides agreed on his Grand Mastership, but the two sides soon split

again. The Palapratian wing shattered into dozens of conflicting orders. Today, while Catholic neo-Templar orders have been established (with papal approval), there are more than one hundred Palapratian neo-Templar obediences.

According to Massimo Introvigne, “Fabré-Palaprat stands at the gateway of modern neo-Templarism as such, and its endemic proclivity for division and schism.”[1]

ANTOINE FABRE D’OLIVET

Antoine Fabre d’Olivet (1767–1825) was hardly known until the late nineteenth century, when Joseph Alexandre Saint-Yves d’Alveydre (b. 1842, died at Pau in the Basses Pyrenees on February 6, 1909) advocated his cause in a Paris hungry for esoteric enlightenment. In doing so, it is considered that Saint-Yves plagiarized the master’s teachings after meeting Virginie Faure, an old lady who had known Fabre d’Olivet in Jersey. Nevertheless, through Saint-Yves’s efforts, Fabre d’Olivet’s fame peaked during the Symbolist period of the late 1880s and 1890s, when Symbolist poets and painters were encouraged to see d’Olivet as a kind of spiritual pagan before his time.

Fabre d’Olivet had some extraordinary and highly influential convictions.

His ideas would also be incorporated into the thinking of some notable nineteenth-century neo-Rosicrucian revivalists, to the extent of generating a kind of philosophical fusion, notable particularly in the thought of Gérard Encausse (Papus) and his followers, who joined his Martinist Order.

Fabre d’Olivet was a self-proclaimed neo-Pythagorean of (unusually in this context) Protestant background, who between 1800 and 1805 experienced a religious crisis. This crisis was resolved only by a commitment to theosophical wisdom. He had discovered a Unity behind all phenomena that was both source and end of All. Life experience was a working out, or manifestation, of a process that brought diversity and duality back to unity. Knowing this, and freely participating with it, was the road to salvation. What was good for the All was good for him, and vice versa.

D’Olivet recognized that he was hardly the first person to have received such a total vision or *gnosis* of life. Rather, the essence of his experience was the essence of something he called the Tradition. The Tradition must, he

concluded, exist in all people at some level, having been passed on since long ago. It must have been a primitive revelation, granted by providence to humanity. This did not mean "primitive" as we now think of the term. D'Olivet meant that the civilization that lived wholly by the Tradition was pristine, pure, original, simple, and paradisiacal. (This theme is evident in the *Fama*'s treatment of the original "Dignity of Man," of Adam in Paradise.)

The prior existence of the Tradition (before 4500 BC) was clear to Fabre d'Olivet from the perception that all ancient wisdom traditions had so much that was essential held in common. Only priesthoods with vested interests prevented the realization that was obvious, he believed, to all thinking people.

The Tradition went from the Egyptians to Moses, from Pythagoras to Orpheus and Jesus. These were, in d'Olivet's estimation, divine men who had fully realized the Tradition and therefore knew how to bind Will to Providence (God's will, foresight, and provision). They knew the way back to the Unity.

While very much an autodidact, d'Olivet was nonetheless in touch with Louis Claude de St.-Martin's friends and disciples after 1800. He knew about the theurgy of the Elect Cohens practiced by Pasqually and Willermoz. The concept of the Elect Priests of the Universe was not unconnected with the idea of the Tradition.

Between 1813 and 1824, d'Olivet composed Illuminist works, chief of which were *Les vers dorés de Pythagore* (The golden verses of Pythagoras, 1813), *La Langue hébraïque restituée* (The Hebraic language restored, 1816), *Caïn: Mystère dramatique de Lord Byron* (Cain, the dramatic mystery of Lord Byron, 1823), and the *Histoire philosophique du genre humain* (The Philosophical history of the human type, 1824).

In "The Hebrew Language Restored," D'Olivet claimed Hebrew to be one of three primordial language idioms revealed to humanity by God. It was a hieroglyphic language veiling deep truths. Its true interpretation was closely guarded by the Jewish neo-Pythagorean Essenes, presented by him as a small group of Alexandrian sages, bound by oath to keep their doctrines secret. The Greek Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible on which English, Latin, and French Bibles are based) was merely the *literal* translation of the Hebrew text, not the *esoteric* translation.

D’Olivet reckoned he had discovered the esoteric meaning of the original Hebrew. His theosophical decoding of the Hebrew text furnished him with the principles on which to base an all-encompassing theory of human destiny, superior, he believed, to any written history. He had other ideas too.

D’Olivet was attracted to Franz Anton Mesmer’s theory of universal vital fluidity or “animal magnetism,” which mysteriously binds all that there is into a flowing whole. Indeed, d’Olivet healed a deaf-mute on the principle that hearing was a *volitive* faculty. *Volitive* means to do with the will. He believed that the deaf boy’s cure proved that to awaken the faculty would cure the deafness.

This idea was linked to his hypertheosophical reading of the book of Genesis, in which the figure of Eve corresponded to the volitive faculty. Thus she was brought forth from Adam’s rib while Adam was in deep sleep. This sleep d’Olivet compared to “magnetic sleep” or somnambulism. Magnetized sleep awakens the volitive faculty. The coming of Eve then represented the awakening of the faculty in Adam. Once Adam was joined to Will, there would be problems in Paradise.

In the case of the deaf-mute, he had been plunged into magnetized sleep, and Fabre d’Olivet had applied his own will, drawing forth the faculty in the boy by sympathetic magnetism. He succeeded; the boy could hear! Imagine if one could do this to the whole of society . . .

Likewise, when looking at history, d’Olivet saw the records of a kind of deaf-mute: events without much real meaning, spiritually void and ultimately depressing. History needed magnetizing too. In a conventional history book, its fundamental account, however accurate externally (dates and so on), will always be false to the truth of life because it is written without true knowledge of the principles that govern life and the cosmos. This was his view. There was far more to history than mere history.

The metaphysical facts concerning the spiritual nature of humanity must be grasped if humankind was to restore its place in the hierarchy of being, he deduced. (The rediscovery of the “Dignity of Man” is also a theme of the *Fama,* as is the ability to read sacred texts with a new “tongue.”) D’Olivet applied the principles to the problems of his own time and decided he was now equipped to take on and defeat one of the most famous philosophers of the period.

Immanuel Kant had argued that spiritual truths were not knowable to reason. That is to say, spiritual truths could not be justified by reason alone. In effect, this argument, however reasonable it might sound, suggested that to a rational thinking person, belief in the revelation of the Bible, for example, was not consistent with rationality. However, Kant himself did not conclude from this that revelation was irrational, only that philosophy was not equipped to decide on the truth value of revealed statements. In practice that meant there was a divide between matters of faith and matters of reason. Common discourse would and should take place where reason could be demonstrated.

Religion was being pushed out of science. This was, for men like d'Olivet, the work of the Enlightenment, and it betokened a general darkness; its progress would entail a reversal for the cause of humanity. Among others of his time, D'Olivet saw through what was, in fact, a battering ram into the citadel of Western European religious and philosophical life. He reckoned Kant had simply misunderstood the facts of human nature. Obviously, Kant was not in touch with the Tradition; otherwise he would have been familiar with the ancient tripartite nature of man, according to which Man is body, soul, and spirit. Kant had confused rationality with Reason.

Fabre d'Olivet distinguished between rationality and reason on the grounds that while rationality corresponds to the soul, reason corresponds to the spirit. Another word for d'Olivet's "reason" is *intellect*. The Latin *intellectus* corresponds to the Greek *nous*, and while it may be translated as "reason," it is better referred to as intellect or even as "the higher mind" or "higher reason."

This intellectual, spiritual faculty derives from the intelligible nature and source of the logos-inspired universe; it is a mirror of heaven, enabling humankind to receive higher knowledge. This higher knowledge transcends the mere rational ability to order information based on the senses (body).

The soul (the human passions) can rationalize, but the soul is not the source of reason itself; it cannot comprehend the source of intelligibility. That faculty belongs to the spirit, which is of the higher unity. Kant was wrong because he confused rationality with intellectuality, failing to grasp the spiritual nature of reason proper.

Neatly, d'Olivet shows that Kant's philosophy results only in stripping

humanity of its spiritual faculties through his vanity in trying to get an inferior faculty to comprehend its superior. Spiritual truths transcend rationality. (This is a kabbalistic insight too, where the “three supernals” are above the “abyss.”) Kant failed in his attempt to subject the superior to the inferior, and then had the folly to conclude that spiritual truths were *unknowable*: a fool caught in error.

Fabre d’Olivet understood reason as an intuitive faculty capable of grasping the ontological Absolute. This ability was also one ascribed to the kind of history generated from the spiritual intellect, rather than the mere cataloging of instances of human passion, temporal sequence, and apparent change (conventional history). Thus, once understood, the Bible’s storytelling was far superior to what might have been a conventional chronicle. The book of Genesis in particular related mighty truths about humankind that only spiritual reason could grasp.

Fabre d’Olivet described the restored narrative of the book of Genesis. He was obliged to do this because its essential inner truth had been hidden by the Essenes for fear of breaking faith with the demands of the Tradition. It was now time to reveal the truth. D’Olivet’s Illuminist drama of Genesis is a child of its master and his time, played out in a Behmenist universe flowing with divine powers, with Adam as a spiritual being of great power.

D’Olivet examined the story of Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve, and showed how the biblical story concealed amazing facts of human nature and destiny. He identified unfallen humanity with Will, which, alongside Destiny and Providence, was one of the Tradition’s three cosmogonic principles of the universe. Human history, in its highest perspective, concerns the interplay of Man, who is a fourth “kingdom” after the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral (an idea hinted at in the Rosicrucian manifestos), with Will, Providence, and Destiny. How history turns out depends on how Man responds to each principle.

Man.
Will.
Providence.
Destiny.

Man is body, soul, and spirit, which three, when developed, form and comingle into a fourth, volitive life, the life of Will. How may the will be kept truly free? Again, this depends on Man's interaction with Destiny and Providence.

If Man plays his cards right, as it were, he may, through the exercise of the full volitive life, rise from his fallen state to reattain his former cosmogonic status. This achievement will, eventually, harmonize Will, Providence, and Destiny.

In d'Olivet's book on Cain, we read how Adam's posterity divided his former integrated nature. Cain represents Will; Abel, Providence. Thus d'Olivet identified two races: *hommes volatifs,* relying on their own powers, and *hommes providentiels,* trusting in God's love for humanity. Had the human will submitted to Providence, humanity could have been saved. Lucifer intervened, however.

Lucifer is a kind of embodiment of Will (the rebellious angel), and Cain persuades him to kill his brother. Thus Providence is annihilated by Will. It is not that Will is all bad, but that he is literally out of order; he does not see, being blinded by willful rebelliousness, his proper reliance on his brother: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Responding to the crisis, Adam and Eve give life to Seth, who is for d'Olivet the embodiment of Destiny or blind fate. Thereafter, history may be seen as a conflict between the sons of Cain, who champion anarchic liberty, and the sons of Seth, who submit to necessity and work with nature through science. This conflict is ruinous and agonizing for humankind. Good works are forever done and undone in miserable succession. Humanity calls for Providence but—alas—but for the few like Moses, Orpheus, and Buddha, the *hommes providentiels* no longer walk on earth.

However, Providence still works, but indirectly. Providence uses the willful intentions of humanity to effect an ultimate redemption, *apocatastasis,* or reintegration of Adam. There is something of potential value in humanity in spite of the great disasters. Since, according to Fabre d'Olivet, the will of a being corresponds with its essence, he uses the image of a seed. The seed contains the being's full potentiality. This can only be activated fully by effort of will. One is reminded of Aleister Crowley's aphorism that a flower achieves beauty by trying to grow.

This conception gives us an idea of what d'Olivet meant when he said he had found the true meaning of the original Hebrew. The first word of Genesis is *bereshith*. D'Olivet asserts that its usual translation, "in the beginning," is superficial. Its essential meaning is *in principio*, in principle, *in potential*. God created the potential of the universe, the elements to be: the seed.

Human beings are necessary to enable its potential to be fulfilled. The creation brought about potential being. Each person has this potential being within him, literally *in potentia*.

The naturalist or ordinary doctor sees only the incomplete being. The good doctor aids its completion, the fulfillment of its potential. This was a radically different notion from current educational practice, which tended to see a person as a vessel that had to be filled with information and acculturated externally.

We then return to the idea that history is the unfolding of what was there in essence, the fulfillment of potential being in space and time. Metaphysical principles are played out in time and space. D'Olivet distinguishes allegorical history from "positive history." Positive history merely records events without spiritual significance. On the other hand, allegorical history arranges events that may never have happened into a dramatiszation of the spiritual destiny of humanity. The importance of this idea will become clearer when we look into the business of the Priory of Sion phenomenon in chapter 18. D'Olivet's ideas may somehow have legitimized the production of an alternative history that, although historically false, could nonetheless be seen as allegorically real.

According to Fabre d'Olivet, only allegorical history was worthy of study. It would have been interesting to know what he thought of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. Would he have regarded it as allegorical history—a history invisible to the "positive historians"?

Returning to d'Olivet's idea of Man, humanity is at first subject to destiny, but when the spark or germ of God, or divine will, develops, the being reacts against Destiny, manifesting as an opposing volitional force whose essence is liberty.

D'Olivet observed a constant struggle between will and destiny. Should human beings yield to destiny, years of miserable suppression and decadence will ensue, whereas Will joined to Providence leads them to perfection.

These ideas are not only highly reminiscent of Pico della Mirandola's Hermetically inspired *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486) but also represent the credo of the "active Outsider," the person of Will who, though a "World-Stranger," may nonetheless act decisively upon it: the person who can say, "Nothing is written until I write it."

Fabre d'Olivet established a principle that would become a strong feature of the Martinism into which his ideas would be poured by Gérard Encausse (Papus) at the end of the century. For Fabre d'Olivet, theocracy was the political correlate of the principle of unity. Dynasties with spiritual authority were the ideal, so long as they were in communion with the Tradition to arm them against the attacks of Destiny that sap the Will of the drive to realize full potential.

D'Olivet's *Histoire philosophique* concludes with a call to France, the rest of Europe, and ultimately the world to form a single theocratic empire under a supreme pontiff, uniting the three cosmogonic principles in the ideal social structure.

This idea correlates to the call for general reformation in the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis,* when placed in the context of a victorious Lion who will rid the world of opposition and establish a renewed golden age.

In the ideal social structure, the full development of the volitional germ or spark constitutes the restored Will of Universal Man. Once he is restored to his pristine dignity, Destiny and Providence are then harmonized into a fourth principle, the Mirror of Divinity.

Catholics might balk at Fabre d'Olivet's reduction of Christianity to one particular manifestation of the Tradition. D'Olivet did not believe Christianity had actually changed anything fundamentally on the religious plane. There was no once-and-for-all salvific act of redemption through which all humankind might be saved. Salvation was an ongoing process. Jesus's death and resurrection were, then, signifiers of the process, showing what is possible when the will of humanity combines with the will of Providence. (It is interesting to compare d'Olivet's views in this regard with the statement found in the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library text *The Apocryphon of John:* "I am the *pronoia* [providence] of the pure light.")

This knowledge Fabre d'Olivet wished to revive as an aspect of the primal

Tradition. Humankind must eventually attain that which Christ demonstrated, by the exercise of will in trust of Providence.

Fabre d'Olivet gathered his disciples into a sect called Théodoxie Universelle, writing its liturgy and ritual. He used the structure of a masonic lodge but, interestingly, replaced all the architectural imagery with images and symbols relating to agriculture, emphasizing the cultivation of the seed's potential—for him, a more potent symbolism than the building of the Temple. (Jesus had used both categories of image to express spiritual dynamics.) The sect's teachings were outlined in *La vraie Maçonnerie et la céleste culture* (The true Masonry and celestial culture; unpublished until edited by Léon Cellier in 1953).

JOSEPH ALEXANDRE SAINT-YVES D'ALVEYDRE

Joseph Alexandre Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, known to his friends as the Marquis or Saint-Yves, was born in 1842, seventeen years after Fabre d'Olivet died, but on discovering the latter's philosophy, Saint-Yves found nothing out of date in it. For him, it was timeless truth.

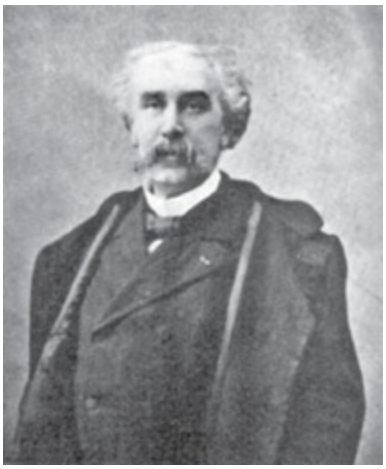
Fabre d'Olivet's philosophy was nonetheless incorporated into the doctrine Saint-Yves called *synarchy*—a kind of highborn opponent of anarchy (*Keys to the East*, 1877). *Anarchy* means "without rule," or splitting apart the ties that compel obedience; *synarchy*, by contrast, means bringing together into a rule, or order.

Saint-Yves's order, like d'Olivet's, was hierarchical, all-inclusive, and, at its head, theocratic. Everyone had his or her station in life and should be respected in that station and discouraged from upsetting the body of the whole. Social order was there for a purpose. It was a way of ensuring the reintegration of humankind into the divine plenitude, restoring the divine image. The benefits were intended to be primarily spiritual as well as aesthetic. It appealed to Roman Catholic monarchists with theosophist leanings. There were enough of those in Saint-Yves's lifetime to provide him with a ready audience.

Early in his life, Saint-Yves's professed his mission: to be the Pythagoras of Christianity. He was a natural showman. Pythagoras was known as the

instigator of a school of esoteric wisdom who taught the lessons of the soul through an orderly system discerned in the mathematics of nature; Saint-Yves attempted something similar through his lectures and books.

After completing military service, Saint-Yves joined a group of French political exiles in Jersey. The exiles gathered around the figure of Victor Hugo (1802–1885), who was known to participate in spiritist seances. Saint-Yves soon got used to the idea of visitations or communications with beings from another plane. Thus he felt able to put "flesh" (if that is the right word) on d'Olivet's idea of a Tradition-based society that had dominated humankind seven thousand years and more before Christ.



Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, the founder of Synarchy.

Saint-Yves conceived of a vast historical system built about the figure of Ram. Ram was the legislator of humanity (the name Abraham, he believed, or Ab-Ram, came from the original Ram); that is why Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Hindu traditions all connected to the figure as the father of peoples, believing in a divine Unity. According to Saint-Yves's synarchic system, Ram's spiritual direction is exercised out of the subterranean city of Agarttha through a figure called the king of the world. From this place sprang the hope of the world. If the modern, industrialized world could regain its lost harmony by submitting to the "universal Trinitarian synarchy," all would be well. Saint-Yves had his own mission, and he thought everyone should have a mission, including groups operative in the world who he considered bore great responsibility. He therefore addressed those groups in a series of *Mission* books.

In 1882 appeared *The Current Mission of the Sovereigns* and *The Current Mission of the Workers.* In 1884, he launched his *Mission of the Jews*, and finally, in 1886, he wrote his *Mission of India in Europe*, which was not published until 1910. His *States-general of Universal Suffrage* appeared in 1888.

Saint-Yves, while befriending some figures of the French occult revival of the 1880s and 1890s (especially Gérard Encausse, or Papus), steered clear of the masonic occult world of the time and concentrated on addressing politicians, business syndicates, and the reading and opinion-forming public. However, the notion that esoteric ideas of the kind he was promulgating could have a political and social application was very inspiring to such as Papus, and a number of Martinists and monarchist Catholics attempted to combine their esoteric interests with political schemes, looking for a "reformation of the whole wide world" and the arrival of a suitable global pontiff.

When such schemes became public knowledge between the wars, a widespread paranoia ensued, taken advantage of by fascist-type societies who spoke of a worldwide masonic-Jewish or Martinist conspiracy, while, conversely, other right-wing groups took the idea of synarchy and stretched it to unintended lengths of nonrepresentative authoritarianism. The outflow of such paranoia persists to this day.

Saint-Yves's idea consisted of a hierarchy of economic, political, and religious powers working as a great spiritual body based on the Christian Trinity, so naturally appealing to some Catholics disgruntled with secular, republican society.

It is clear that the expression "Rose Croix" or "Rosicrucian" had at this point become little more than an add-on logo, or even militant nationalist emblem. This is a predominant feature of nineteenth-century settings wherein the word "Rosicrucian" appears. Time has worked its gray magic and obscured, to a great extent, any reliable knowledge of the original Rosicrucian movement; it has become a figment of history, a mere tincture or coloring to an otherwise alien pot.

When our next figure, for example, accounted for why he used the term "Rosicrucian" to describe his esoteric sexual teaching, he declared that he could have used any other name, but people seemed to think "Rosicrucian"

was the best way to put it. The word lent a vague authority to the proceedings, the hint of a higher level of spiritual operation.

PASCHAL BEVERLEY RANDOLPH

It may be observed that all it might take for an order or system to claim the word “Rosicrucian” was some kind of founding legend involving a trip to the East in which initiation into hitherto unsuspected secrets took place.

Perhaps the East was running out of exploitable secrets by the time P. B. Randolph (1825–1875) established his Eulis practices in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Or perhaps it was something in the Victorian era, whose Protestant teachings on decency were not confined to Great Britain. If you were going to tame the Wild West of the disunited states in the 1860s, you would need to tame the sex drive as well. Newly established states in America’s West would have to become less wild if the cause of civilization were to continue to be used as the chief excuse for annexing so much land from its aboriginal custodians.

There had always been an aspect of alchemy that used blatant sexual imagery to convey alchemical processes. The most obvious image would be the copulating couple of Sol and Luna, from whose union a higher unity might be achieved: the Rebis, or Hermetic Hermaphrodite.

Whether our ancestors found the images of alchemical figures either naked or enjoying sexual intercourse sexually arousing is unknown, but we can be sure that they found them suggestive of great mysteries. The most obvious of these mysteries was the ancient Gnostic intuition that the Original Man had combined in his sexless self male and female polarities. Thus, Eve was *extracted* from Adam, whereafter the Fall into duality and opposition began. That is to say, according to the much worked theory, the existence of evil was necessitated by the primal being’s division or manifestation.

As Eve was extracted from Adam, so Wisdom separated herself from the Unknowable God’s primal unity. This could be seen either as being in conformity with God’s will (as in the analogous system of Jacob Böhme) or as a kind of precosmic catastrophe (radical Gnosticism).

For manifestation of divine principles to occur, duality was inevitable: black and white, male and female, spirit and matter, good and evil, light and

darkness, and so on. Manifestation meant visibility or contrast. Visionary realization of the profound root of this contrast, or necessity of contraries, is what set Böhme on his way to his own theosophical system, often joined to Rosicrucian modes of understanding.

Since Gnostics have bewailed the existence of evil and been concerned that it had no final part in God's absolute plan, the cause of evil might yet be reversed by a sacred pattern of sex. The idea was to reverse the damage done by the original rupture by turning the outcome of that division (sex) back on itself: a sexual union aimed not at mutual satisfaction in lust but as a symbol of divine union or reunion, or, indeed, reintegration, to use the Martinist phrase.

It should be noted that in most of these theories, the fault almost always lay with the female principle. In Valentinian Gnosticism it is Sophia (Wisdom herself) who causes the initial rupture in the divine being by wishing to conceive copies of the divine ideas she has witnessed in the primal father. Her rebellion is then mirrored in that of the earthly Sophia, Eve, who partakes of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (duality) and soon finds herself and Adam manifesting in a lower existence (a punishment according to the book of Genesis).

In short, Man and Woman leave their paradise and find themselves on Earth with all that the new condition entails: self-consciousness, nakedness, cold, uncertainty, evil. And sex, of course. And with it: death.

So for the Gnostic mind, there has always been a lot more to the sexual aspect of life than a game of lust and reproduction. Insofar as it was the cause of the downfall, it might also be the gateway to recover the primal union of being with God, if only momentarily. Magic has always been willing (if not always able) to turn mystical insights and theories into practical instruments of power.

Members of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer system, for example, who speculated on the idea of the "first matter" of the alchemical work, experimented with a number of substances that might conform to the lowly, unregarded state of nature from which the philosophic Stone might ultimately be obtained. Feces was about as lowly as you could get, so feces could be dried and buried for seasons in conformity with astrological ("cosmic") considerations, and dug up at the propitious time for alchemical refinement.

Urine was used. Nobody really knew, from a chemical point of view, what these substances contained. They were considered to have occult virtues, which were certainly hidden from the practitioners.

And then there was dew (Latin, *ros*). Readers will recall the interest shown in dew by respondents to the original Rose Cross writings. Dew was thought of as a mystical product, manna from heaven, divine bread made in the heavens, formed from a cross or mysterious union between heaven and Earth. Uniting the above and the below was the key principle of the Hermetic mystery, according to the widely quoted *Tabula Smagdarina* of Hermes Trismegistus. Dew contained, it was believed, an occult star-power, the product of cosmic rays entering the fibers of the earthly Sophia. Dew was therefore an ideal alchemical component, about which Philippo à Gabella and John Dee had written. Dew contained the "Star," a fragment of the divine creative logos.

Then there was another substance that was believed to contain the very essence and idea of Man. It even resembled dew and smelled like one of the three Paracelsian elements of salt, sulfur, and mercury. What was the consecrated "sugar of the stars" (Azoth), it might be speculated, if it was not that "dew" called forth through a hole (think of the dream of Christian Rosenkreuz in *The Chemical Wedding*) and brought forth toward the alchemical wedding?

Such might be considered the more secret interpretation of the Rosicrucian mystery, though when such an interpretation was born, we cannot say. In its developed, phallicist form, it was probably the creation of a handful of fringe masons at the beginning of the twentieth century who had experimented with teachings relating to Tantra yoga. This sex-gnosis was indeed cutting-edge stuff and could so easily be abused, misinterpreted—rather like Tantric sex magic being used as a marital aid, or additional sexual turn-on for the new age sexual adventurer, hungry for fresh sensation. Sensation is not the point; sacramentalism is.

Did the sinful orgasm contain a holy mystery? Could lust be transformed into God? Or were these sex-magic secrets veiled lest the curious should actually see what kind of minds were involved with the practices—antinomians who believed that humankind would be better off if we destroyed all inhibition over matters of physical disgust?

The secret of the sex-gnosis would have to be guarded with great secrecy and shrouded in grandiose, eloquent phrase lest the vulgar think its advocate was just talking about drinking sexual fluids or having magical sex. Sex-gnosis entered the underground of the Western world under a quasi-Rosicrucian cloak—at least, so it appeared. For while for some traditionalist critics the association has left the cloak indelibly stained, for others, sexual gnosis was a timely return to pre-Catholic spiritual knowledge. For sympathizers of the latter point of view, Rosicrucianism is simply a name for this pre-Christian esoteric and gnostic tradition. That is to say, the official Christian Churches took the sex out of spiritual knowledge, while the Rosicrucian tradition either maintained it or, latterly, put it back in. For their opponents, the suggestion alone was sufficient to cause disgust and nausea.

What was the theory?

If, according to Gnostic theory, sperm contained the logos scattered at the first rupture in the divine being, then sperm contained the full magical potentiality of divine creation. It was widely held that the female only wove the form; the essence of Man came through the male. Could it not be refined to take away the taint of Sophia/Eve's sin? Could it not be redeemed from the manifest form of separated man and be united to the higher soul? Could such an operation not constitute the reintegration spoken of by Pasqually and his associates?

Sexual alchemy.

True, this might be painfully embarrassing, transgressive, scary, and not at all the sort of thing you told your parents about or spoke of in public, but might it yet be the secret key to science *and* the hidden potency of Gnostic religion? Could this not be the key to the elixir of life that had kept Christian Rosenkreuz in great physical shape and spotless, sexless purity for all his 106 inspirational years of physical manifestation, fitting him to go on in realms beyond this world?

Needless to say, the sexual implications of spiritual alchemy were so heavily veiled that only possession of the initial interpretative key could reveal them. Since the vast majority of Rosicrucians had been given a strictly Christian, pietistic, and theosophical framework in which to understand the mystery of Christ the Stone, and would have regarded an interest in orgasms and genital secretions as filthy and impious—things to do with the kabbalistic

nephesch (the soul's link to animal instincts)—the idea of blending the sacred mysteries with sex would have been—and still is—regarded with distaste and even horror.

However, human beings are ever curious, given the chance, and it may be supposed that some few did penetrate the sanctuary. Needless to say, any practices involving the sex instinct were considered fraught with danger, since sex was traditionally the devil's playground, or, at the least, an arena of loss of control. The most highly spiritual people were and are challenged by sexual temptation and skillful seduction. The opportunities for obsession and gross self-delusion were—and are—enormous. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Anyhow, such knowledge could not possibly have come from the sexnegative Christian West; it had to be projected into the East (where such things were legendarily licit) and extracted therefrom, enshrouded as the deepest of deep secrets in the most secret sanctuaries of theosophic, fringe orders and systems.

Each era conceives of its own acceptable forms of sexual liberation. The sex drive has to go somewhere, and, as with a cattle drive, if the stockyard is too small, it overflows. Dealing with sex has for countless numbers of people been a trial, exacerbated by lack of good medical and technical knowledge. Those who offer a path through the difficulty may benefit from what is a perennial need.

Black American visionary and spiritualist (one who claims to communicate with dead people) Pascal Beverley Randolph employed drugs, magic, mirrors, and sex to enlighten his clients. His earliest forays into notoriety came in the 1840s and 1850s with a spiritualist (or "spiritist") ministry that took him to Europe and Great Britain. He was prone to become unbalanced and irrational as a result of opening himself up to whatever spirit might choose to employ him. He was often, he said himself, insane.

By the middle of the 1850s, he had had enough of the spiritist practices, having realized the pitfalls of the passive state and having asked himself the simple question: How could one know that it was the dead person to whom one was speaking?

In 1861–62, Randolph is believed to have encountered the Nusa'iri (or Nosairi) of Syria—as well as the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. The Nosairi keep

their secrets to themselves in Lebanon to this day, but, according to Walter Birks's account in *The Treasure of Montségur*, they have some gnostic traditions in their keeping, such as the idea that the holy grail, the vessel of divine knowledge, is man himself, a realization accompanied by some initiatory ceremony.[2]

It is believed that Randolph may have worked in France and Britain with scryers (users of crystals, bowls of water, and mirrors for divination) such as Frederick Hockley and the masonic collector Kenneth Mackenzie. A natural magician, Randolph returned from his Eastern sojourn with a new emphasis, using mirrors to penetrate the "material veil" (intense concentration), clairvoyance, Mesmerism, and magic. As if his treasury of knowledge from the East were not enough, Randolph also claimed to have been instructed by beings in both this world and the "soul world," to which he had regular flights, encountering the full gamut of angels, unborn souls, Eons, seraphs, and so on.

Randolph had his own ideas of what true Rosicrucians were. The fraternity consisted of supernal, evolved beings. Some of them were human, some would never be human. As with the theories of the Martinists, the idea of a Rosicrucian Fraternity should not be taken too literally (that means, I suppose, *do not ask too many difficult questions*).

On earth, the word "Rosicrucian" was only a cloak, a protean logo for a brotherhood with a far greater role in the celestial hierarchy than mere humanity in its benighted state could possibly comprehend. Who could claim to know it all? But those with the *gnosis* knew how to accept the limitations of earthly knowledge while being convinced of the spiritual and superior reality of the invisible brotherhood. This argument would be trotted out again and again and again when human organizations took on the awesome mantle of Rosicrucian responsibility and assumed authority ("Don't take my word for it; *they* know"). You cannot argue rationally with a person who possesses satisfying (if curiously inert) reasons to assert that your reason is inadequate. *Gnosis* transcends reason.

Randolph had a vivid and creative imagination. Adept beings from on high revealed themselves to his imagination under names like Ramus, an Egyptian. Ramus was Chief or Grand Master of the Superlative Order of Gebel Al Maruk, also known as the Brethren of the Rosy Cross. Egypt was at

this time being opened up widely to European traders, and there was a continual fascination with Egyptian artifacts and myths as the hieroglyphs began to surrender their secrets. (“Ramus” sounds uncannily like Saint-Yves’s “Ram.”)

In Europe and America, Ramus’s order was to be known as the Imperial Order of Rosicrucia. Randolph’s imagination was further stimulated by hashish, datura, and opium—which also raised his experience of sexual intercourse to visionary heights.

Randolph wrote a text that one might have thought would have done a roaring trade in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Perhaps the title might have put off would-be users. *Dealings with the Dead* revealed that the purpose of the immortal spirit of man was to advance through myriad worlds and multiple incarnations in an infinite struggle for selfconsciousness, spiritual power, and divinization.

Randolph taught what he called sexual magic, using drugs, magic, and trances, in privately printed texts and written manuscripts. After 1861, Randolph took the next step. He began to formulate Rosicrucian groups, extending his teachings from Boston in the East to San Francisco in the West.

Some readers may already have observed how many aspects of Randolph’s teaching would become staples of twentieth-century magical orders with Rosicrucian-style elements, such as Aleister Crowley’s influential wing of the fringe-masonic Ordo Templi Orientis (after 1912) and Crowley’s other order, known by the initials *A* and *A* (supposedly denominating the Astrum Argenteum, or “Silver Star”)

Randolph anticipated Crowley’s emphasis on the centrality of the will. According to Randolph, humankind’s active role and progress in the spiritual world necessitated the cultivation and application of what he called the Imperial Will.

Randolph’s vision of progress involved a kind of dynamic conflict between the competing forces of the Brothers of the Light (identified with the Rosicrucians) and the Brothers of the Shadow. This latter identity consisted of the aggregate force generated by evil people and the host of celestial wastrels who had nothing better to do than to tax and frustrate humankind. If the Brother of the Light was opposed, it could only be as a result of his own failure to observe his higher teaching in some matter or matters, or it was the

activity of the Brothers of the Shadow, in which case one would need to better cement one's ties with the Brotherhood of the Light and draw on that collective spiritual power through a resumed effort of Imperial Will.

The human eye revealed only the manifestations of a far greater cosmic struggle between competing hierarchies. The best thing was to make the free and willed choice to become an instrument of the light, using all the powers that God had bestowed upon one, including the largely untapped and widely abused and misunderstood power of sexual energy.

In 1865, as the Southern states fell to the ferocious onslaught of industrialized Union power (the Civil War), Randolph established himself in Boston as a specialist in sexual problems, teaching freed slaves.

In 1874, Randolph established his ultimate degree of sex teaching in a system he named Eulis, offering the magical benefits of sexual ecstasy to the worthy. A year later, the perennially unstable Randolph shot himself in a jealous rage over a supposed infidelity on the part of his wife.

THE SOCIETAS ROSICRUCIANA IN ANGLIA AND THE HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

We have recently had cause to mention the British scryer and masonic collector Kenneth Mackenzie (1833–1886), an indefatigable researcher into all matters masonic and occult. Mackenzie founded the Rosicrucian Society in Anglia (SRIA for short) in 1867 in association with Robert Wentworth Little and others, ostensibly for master masons to study the Kabbalah and the doctrines of Hermes Trismegistus. That combination covered a great deal of ground: at least a very large part of the entire gnostic tradition, much theosophical masonry, and of course the collective *depositum* of the historic glacier that had become Rosicrucianism.

The order is still in existence today and confers nine grades, whose names will be familiar to students of both the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer and the slightly later Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn: Zelator, Theoricus, Practicus, Philosophus, Adeptus Minor, Adeptus Major, Adeptus Exemptus, Magister, and Magus (IX°). The teaching of the order concerns alchemy,

religious philosophies around the world, and elevated teaching of a spiritual and heavenly kind in the tradition of Rosicrucianstyle theosophical interpretations of the Bible. The presentation of papers to members on aspects of the Rosicrucian, Gnostic, and Hermetic traditions is a major purpose of the order.

In this regard, it is fascinating to consult the *Transactions of the Newcastle College in the Province of Northumberland and Durham, Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia,* volume 1, part 1, of 1891. The printing of these transactions postdate the founding of the Golden Dawn by members of the SRIA by three years (the Golden Dawn was founded in March 1888).

The SRIA's province of Northumberland and Durham was created and consecrated on July 23, 1890, at the Masonic Hall, Maple Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, "by Commission from the Most Worthy Supreme Magus," William Robert Woodman (1828–1891), who was presumably not well enough to attend. The consecration was performed by four members of the SRIA, including two men whose names are famous in the annals of the history of the Golden Dawn: Right Worthy Frater W. Wynn Westcott, VIII°, Hon. IX°, Secretary General, and Right Worthy Frater S. L. Macgregor Mathers, VIII°.

Mathers and Westcott provided the axis of leadership of the Golden Dawn during the 1890s, but if later accounts are to be credited, the two men did not enjoy a deep sympathy with each other (readers interested should consult the works of R. A. Gilbert and of Ellic Howe on the detailed history of the Golden Dawn and the SRIA).

It may be supposed that the fraternal behavior of Masonry enabled Mathers and Westcott to overcome personal feelings sufficiently to establish the new order in concert. It would be interesting to have eavesdropped on their conversation on that July day in 1890. Perhaps they spoke less of the gathering strength of the Golden Dawn and how to promote it and more of the passing of the Anti-Trust Act in Washington and the appointment of Cecil Rhodes as prime minister of the Cape Colony, South Africa.

Westcott (1848–1925), physician and deputy coroner for Central Middlesex and Central London, presented a paper ("On the History of Rosicrucianism") at the consecration of Newcastle College that gives a very clear indication of the conception that he and presumably his fraters in the

SRIA had of Rosicrucianism.

The Rosicrucian Fraternity's members were, Westcott wrote,

> now all Freemasons, so far as the Soc. Ros. In Anglia is concerned; it is notably related to science, for it pursues scientific methods in its researches into the lost learning of the ancient sages; it is distinctly philosophical, for its favoured investigations are those into the forgotten myths of the ages long past, and speculations upon the unknown future of individual man, and of the human race; it is, finally, a close ally of the dominant religion of western civilisation, for its rituals are marked by Christian allusions, Christian principles, and adoration of the Christian's God.

It is absolutely clear from an appended chronology of "Important Dates in Rosicrucianism" (also by Westcott) that the SRIA sanctioned the belief that Christian Rosenkreuz was a historical figure (though his name was probably only a "motto" or *nom de plume*) who in 1407 "designed a scheme of Reformation" and in 1409 built the House "Sancti Spiritus." His vault was constructed in 1450, and nine years later C. R. wrote "The Hermetic Romance." The vault, closed in 1484, was reopened in 1604, four years after "Frater K. N." became Magus (an SRIA grade!).

Westcott then mentions Maier, Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, and John Heydon, implying they were all in the order, then tells us that in 1710, Sincerus Renatus, "Sigmond [*sic*] Richter" was also Magus of the Order. After three more unremarkable date entries, we learn that in 1867 Right Worshipful Frater Robert Wentworth Little, SM (Supreme Magus), reorganized the society, dying in 1878, whereupon his position was conferred upon another founder of the Golden Dawn, Dr. William Robert Woodman.

Nobody attending the consecration would be left in any doubt that the masonic SRIA was a direct descendant of the fraternity founded in Germany by Christian Rosenkreuz. This was neither the first nor the last deception that Westcott would be party to in his and his associates' desire to create a Rosicrucian fantasy order that would bring fantasy to the state of reality and then project it back into the realm of fantasy.

In his history, Westcott states plainly: "The 'Fama' is historical and is the

Key Stone to our Order." He then assesses that "Valentine Andrea," while credited with authorship, may have been the author of the appendant document, the *Confessio fraternitatis*, but, Westcott states, "I cannot believe he wrote the former [the *Fama*]." It was apparently inconceivable to Westcott that such a document as the *Fama* could have come from the hand of an ordinary human being. He was apparently familiar with the writer A. E. Waite's view that the *Confessio Fraternitatis* was full of nasty Protestant apocalypticism and that Andreae the Lutheran pastor wrote works attacking the products of Rosicrucians (*The Real History of the Rosicrucians*, 1887). Waite would join the Golden Dawn for the first time in January 1891 (demitting in 1893).

Since the seventeenth century, according to Westcott, "The years have rolled on and with altered circumstances, alterations of rule and procedure have arisen, until about 1850 considerable more publicity was given to membership of the Order."

Westcott then puts in a plug for his and Mathers's other, pet order, the Golden Dawn: "Other branches from the original German stock still flourish, but carry on a more concealed existence, and teach a more esoteric and mystical theosophy; such an one is the Chabrath Zereh Aur Bokher, or the Androgynous Order of the G.D., of which England has three colleges meeting with extreme privacy."

This must have whetted an appetite that Mathers and Westcott were doubtless on hand to satisfy to a limited extent. The Golden Dawn's Inner Order ceremonies (the Inner Order took the Rosicrucian name of the Order of the Ruby Rose and Cross of Gold) were not completed until 1895, replete with a wooden reconstruction in a London town house of the secret vault of Christian Rosenkreuz. This was for use in the Adeptus Minor ceremony, over which there would be much fighting some five years later, as the order began to split apart.

The extraordinary Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was the brainchild of Frederick Holland, an industrial chemist, who joined the SRIA in April 1882 and then set up his own "Society of Eight." Kenneth Mackenzie, a man who had met the near legendary French mage Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse-Louis Constant, 1810–1875) in 1861, was attracted to Holland's esoteric group (as he had been to the activities of P. B. Randolph). The men looked to a

selection of esoteric fringe masonries for inspiration, including the Royal Oriental Order of Sikha and the Sat B'hai, as well as German orders of the eighteenth century.

What they wanted, above all, was a disciplined magical order that would not just talk about Transcendental Magic (as Lévi, its "professor," called it) but would actually teach people from scratch—men and women—how to practice it. They were fully aware of the work of Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society (founded in 1875) with its stress on Indian and Middle Eastern doctrines, but they felt that members of that society were lacking in the real *praxis* of becoming working magi, magicians, men and women with sacred knowledge of angels and demons with a desire to explore the farthest regions of the microcosm, in defiance of the prevailing scientific materialism.

The founders were more interested in the Western esoteric tradition than they were in Hinduism or Buddhism. They wanted to commune with the spiritual experiences of John Dee, Albertus Magnus, Paracelsus—and Christian Rosenkreuz. The appetite for this tradition had been stimulated richly by the Hermetic Society of Anna Kingsford, a beautiful and brilliant woman, and her partner, Edward Maitland.

Furthermore, since William Woodman's arrival in the SRIA, the doctrines of the kabbalists had assumed great significance, and it was therefore considered fortunate that they had also acquired the unusual skills and singular personality of Samuel Mathers (1854–1915), who had translated kabbalist works and applied their symbolism to the Tarot and the Western magical and Rosicrucian traditions in general. Mathers also had a genius for ritual expression of esoteric complexes. In this he was not alone. Until his death in 1886, Kenneth Mackenzie had also been busy in the world of ritual formation.

Mackenzie took an interest in as much material stemming from the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer as could be located in London's United Grand Lodge Library and elsewhere. The Gold- und Rosenkreuzer had offered a kind of home-teaching, mail-order correspondence course in the arcana of the West, and something of this kind was apparently being envisaged for the new order.

Mackenzie died, however, his work incomplete. The rituals, only "scored" in outline, were also written in cipher; the use of cipher would entail unusual and unforeseen consequences.

At Mackenzie's death, William Wynn Westcott took over the former's role as grand secretary of the fringe masonic Swedenborgian Rite. Among papers pertaining to that role, Westcott found Mackenzie's rituals, and realized that the cipher came from the *Polygraphiae* of Abbot Trithemius of Sponnheim. Westcott then translated what would become rituals for the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

An order with such vast pretensions and ambition as the Golden Dawn would need an appropriate pedigree. How else could it assert its authority?

The point of the new order was suddenly given new impetus with the death of Anna Kingsford. With her passing and that of Maitland's Hermetic society, there was now a potential body of paying recruits. But more particularly, Westcott seems to have wanted the spirit of Anna Kingsford to go on, subtly, in the order. He therefore invented an *éminence grise*, an absent shade, a German lady who would provide—by mysterious means—both warrant and ritual for the establishment of what would be seen as the extension of an original German order that stemmed from the master C.R. through a line of tradition that included the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer.

Westcott's idea of the German pedigree was a masterstroke. It resonated with the established mythology of the SRIA, and it looked very good on paper. The Germans were disciplined; true Rosicrucianism was their creation. God knows what had been going on in those amazing castles and towers, so far away from the prying eyes of excitable London journalists! Whatever it was, it had been going on for centuries. Now it was time for the British once more to strut their magical stuff.

The lady had to be given a name. The name was Sprengel: *Anna* Sprengel—after Anna Kingsford, perhaps. The German contact with the "Secret Chiefs" of the order would, of course, be known by her magical motto (all members had to have one).

The lady's motto was to be found on the cover of one of Anna Kingsford's recent reprints (1886) of classic works of the Hermetic tradition. The work was *Astrology Theologiz'd* by "Valentine Weigelius," first printed in English by George Whittington at the Blue Anchor, Cornhill, in 1649.

The motto on the title page, in large letters, was *Sapiens dominabitur Astris*—the wise man rules his stars. This was an injunction understood by Westcott in his own mythomanic style. He would indeed manipulate his stars

to fit such wisdom as he willed. The coroner's word is usually final.

Anna was the source of the authority. Westcott then manufactured a base for Fräulein Sprengel, the confluence of a genuine lodge in Frankfurt-am-Main with a fictitious Rosicrucian Society. Germany then was the alleged source of the names and numbers of the grades, which indeed was true. They were taken largely from the annals of the Goldund Rosenkreuzer, Kenneth Mackenzie's posthumous contribution. And the rest, you could say, is history: a history concisely told in R. A. Gilbert's *Golden Dawn Scrapbook*, an account that might well be supplemented by Israel Regardie's edition of the ceremonies and teachings of *The Golden Dawn*.[3]

However, I should like to add that readers confronted by the grades attained by members of the Golden Dawn are often confused by the numbering conceit employed by the order. The idea was simple enough. As the aspirant advanced in the order, he or she "rose" on the "Tree of Life," the kabbalistic glyph indicating the ten knowable Sephiroth or emanations from the Unknowable God and the twenty-two paths between them.

The Sephiroth are numbered from one to ten, with one being the highest (Kether = Crown) and ten the lowest (Malkuth = Kingdom).

Thus, the Zelator (1☌) began at the lowest sephira, Malkuth (the tenth Sephira), so the Zelator grade was written as 1☌ = 10□; the second, Theoricus, as 2☌ = 9□ (where "9" is the sephira called Foundation);[*1] Practicus 3☌ = 8□ (where "8" is the sephira of Splendor); Philosophus 4☌ = 7□ (7th sephira = Victory); Adeptus Minor 5☌ = 6□ (6th sephira = Beauty); Adeptus Major 6☌ = 5□ (5th sephira = Strength); Adeptus Exemptus 7☌ = 4□ (4th sephira = Mercy); Magister Templi 8☌ = 3□ (3rd sephira = Understanding); Magus 9☌ = 2□ (2nd sephira = Wisdom); Ipsissimus 10☌ = 1□ (1st sephira = The Crown). The highest grade of Ipsissimus ("his own very self" = the "god" of which the personality and mind are the expression) was practically an ideal, really suitable only for a "Secret Chief."

In 1896, Arthur Edward Waite (1857–1942) rejoined the Order of the Golden Dawn and entered its second order, the Roseae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis, keeping a moderately low profile.

In 1903, the long process of agony within the Golden Dawn came to an end with definitive splits right through the order. Waite kept the London Isis

and Urania Temple of the order going until 1914 as his “Independent and Rectified Rite.” In that year, as “the lights went out all over Europe” with the onset of the First World War, Waite closed the Isis and Urania Temple down in recriminations that also involved his leaving the SRIA.

In 1915, Waite founded, without benefit of being himself an Ipsissimus, his Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. Frustrated with occultism, and having lost patience with the idea of “Secret Chiefs,” Waite’s new order, while structured again on an ascent through the Tree of Life, emphasized Christian mysticism and the cultivation of pious, spiritual states of mind, devoid of the willful magic which he doubtless suspected had been at the root of the inflated personality conflicts (and conflicting religious emphases) that had shattered the Golden Dawn.

A “Lamen” employed by A. E. Waite’s Fellowship of the Rosy Cross; note the Hebrew letter *schin* at the center of the rose, symbolizing spirit, which, when added to the center of the tetragrammaton, produces the Hebrew name for Jesus (Yeheshuah). (Photo: R. A. Gilbert)

Waite was the first writer in English to complete a detailed (if overly long) objective history of the Rosicrucians before Frances Yates’s *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* appeared in 1972. Waite’s revised and much expanded version of his *Real History of the Rosicrucians* (1887), entitled *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross,* was published by Rider in 1924, but is now an unreliable source. Waite’s remark at the end of the book that nothing more of

significance was likely to be found that could substantially alter his account was no prophecy; Waite's approach is itself now a part of the history of Rosicrucianism. This is a lesson for all writers on the subject.

STANISLAS, MARQUIS DE GUAÏTA; JOSEPH-AIMÉ (JOSÉPHIN) PÉLADAN; GÉRARD-ANACLET-VINCENT ENCAUSSE, OR "PAPUS"

While members of the SRIA were making their plans for the Golden Dawn in London, similar and not unrelated activity was going on in Paris with equal if not greater fervor. The French occult revival that had grown since the 1840s under the kindly and patriarchal aegis of Eliphas Lévi, professor of Transcendental Magic, was entering its most florid period of creative development in an atmosphere of breathless innovation and devil-may-care liberty.

Paris in the 1880s and 1890s enjoyed a persistent reputation for decadence, naughtiness, and *fin-de-siècle* Art with a capital *A*. Not a little of that reputation can be laid at the door of a group of sometime friends and associates who gathered in the cafés, theaters, and salons of Montmartre. For reasons that seem to have more to do with aesthetic than philosophical considerations, these men employed the imagery and mythology of the Rose-Croix to launch their independent forays into the great work of changing the world. Theirs was a three-pronged attack on the conventions of materialist, bourgeois Europe: Science, Art, and Mystery.

Science, Art, and Mystery (especially the latter two) would be synthesized into a movement in preparation for the coming new age of the free-and-holy spirit to be enjoyed by all who could abandon the corsets of the past and embrace the delirious holiness of the skies.

Stanislas de Guaïta (1861–1897) came to Paris from Alteville in the Moselle with his friend the writer and later politician Maurice Barrès to launch a career in poetry and the life of letters. A suggestion to read the works of Eliphas Lévi led to a rapid change of direction, cemented by acquaintance with the daring, magical novels of another young artistic hopeful, Joséphin Péladan (1858–1918). Péladan's novels, such as Curieuse

(1886), often dealt with the aesthetically seductive and alchemical figure of the Androgyne. De Guaïta was drawn to the slightly older man, and their mutual enthusiasms soon gave birth to the chaotic *Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix* in 1887.

Setting up little occult orders was the thing to do at the time; it was a game, but a game to which one could become fatally attracted. Starting a club or little company is one thing, but an occult order attracts occult forces (or at least one may soon begin to think), and if it is attractive to others, egos will grow. The two men thought it de rigueur to have twelve members, six known, six unknown, in the now time-honored tradition of the Secret Superiors and the Unknown Philosopher.

Stanislas de Guaïta (1861–1897), founder of the Kabbalistic Order of the Rosy Cross.

The six known members included an unusual seeker after occult knowledge, Gérard Encausse (1865–1916; known as Papus). The six unknown members were probably imaginary or, shall we say, unmanifested. Papus would go on to establish his influential Supreme Council of the Martinist Order in 1891, heir to Willermoz's paramount grade of Réau-Croix (Rectified Scottish Rite). Papus's ultimate Martinist degree was that of Supérieur Inconnu (Unknown Superior), which seems to have been envisaged as being somewhat more realizable in person than the ideal Ipsissimus of the Golden Dawn's Inner Order.

Papus developed a political-social agenda, very much influenced by the synarchist ideas of Joseph Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (discussed earlier in this chapter), who, in a series of books that used the word *mission* in the titles, believed in a new composite order of society, hierarchical and governed by

God-inspired figures whose identity would not be soiled by taint of democratic exposure. These ideas attracted monarchists, traditionalist Roman Catholics, and some occultists.

Symbol of de Guaïta's Rosicrucian order, combining the cross, pentagram, tetragrammaton (four letters of the divine name), roses, and the Hebrew letter *schin* (at the apex of the pentagram), relating to the presence of divine spirit and to the "lost word" of Royal Arch Freemasonry.

Papus reintegrated the Martinist inheritance and gave it a synarchist direction.

Such ideas overlapped with but did not fully engage the imaginations of de Guaïta and Péladan. De Guaïta was personally attracted to the idea of a synthesis of esotericism and science. This idea also appealed to Papus, who, in his medical studies, had been impressed by the phenomenon of what he interpreted as the sacrifice of lower organisms to the life of higher organisms. Papus had not expected to find such a scale of values (Catholic values, as he saw them) in the world of microbiology, a world that the science of the time had declared to be materialistic and blind to human values, adopting the amoral credo of the survival of the fittest in an evolution of forms governed only by the raw imperative to select such evolutionary advantages as were necessary for survival.

What all these men had in common was the romantic inheritance that the human imagination must transform the horror of materialism and animal baseness into the rich fruit of beauty, truth, and love through a perpetual sacrament of sacrifice enacted in the soul by the Platonic Jesus.

There was a foreboding in the 1890s that the New Age of the Paraclete (as prophesied by Paracelsus, the Bible, and Eliphas Lévi, for example) would be

opposed by dark forces rising from the unruly lower soul of humankind. Materialist, atheist socialism was one shadow; fascistic nationalism, or "Prussianism," that had been seen in the panoply of its cruel violence in Paris in 1870, was another shadow, while liberal democracy simply appeared too weak to withstand the coming struggle for the soul of the world.

There was a search for a transcendent order, a powerful, magical order that went to the root of the human being and rose to the heights of the spiritual mind. The new order would have a place for all types—but they would be in their place until enlightenment brought forth new minds to replace the old. The past held keys. Not all of the learning of the Middle Ages was decrepit and unworthy. The eternal House of the Holy Spirit, vouchsafed by the wisdom of Christian Rosenkreuz, stood as a symbol, decodable by the cognoscenti, of the union of traditional knowledge and faith with the demands and new revelations of knowledge in the future.

While Péladan shared a fair amount of these ideals, he too had an agenda of his own. He soon found that the Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose- Croix was neither strictly to his taste nor big enough for him. Péladan had called himself Sâr (King) Merodack (or Marduk, the Babylonian Jupiter); and his friend de Guaïta, Nébo (the Babylonian Mercury). Péladan came to the conclusion that they were on different orbits, and the Sâr's destiny lay on a path of his own making.

Joséphin Péladan (1858–1918), founder of the Catholic Order of the Rose Cross, the Temple and the Grail.

Nowadays we are used to the idea of men and women leaving groups and going solo, while leaving a trail of thwarted love, bitterness, and recriminations behind them. Péladan established his own new order in 1890 and became grand master of the Catholic Order of the Rose Cross, the Temple and the Grail.

Péladan recalled how his brother Adrien had been the last initiate of a small Rosicrucian order active in Toulouse around the figure of the Viscount Louis-Charles Edouard de Lapasse (1792–1867) and asserted that his right to establish a new order derived from his brother's initiation.

The new order was really a continuation of a very ancient line of Rosicrucian knowledge with a distinctly Roman Catholic emphasis. Péladan decided to be even more emphatically faithful to his father's roots (his father was a fervent Roman Catholic monarchist who believed the restoration of a Catholic monarchy in France was an eschatological imperative, sanctioned by Christ's will). Should anyone assert that the Fraternity R.C. was plainly a Protestant order (from the *Confessio Fraternitatis's* hostility to the pope), Péladan could simply assert that Christian Rosenkreuz was a Catholic knight who came from a Catholic monastery and who, while seeking the reformation of the church in the hope of the coming new age of the Holy Spirit, had never himself seceded from the church. Protestantism had become an instrument of the state in Germany and elsewhere; only the hidden virtues of the True and Eternal Church, hidden like the Grail within the heart of the Catholic body, could redeem humankind through truth, beauty, and love.

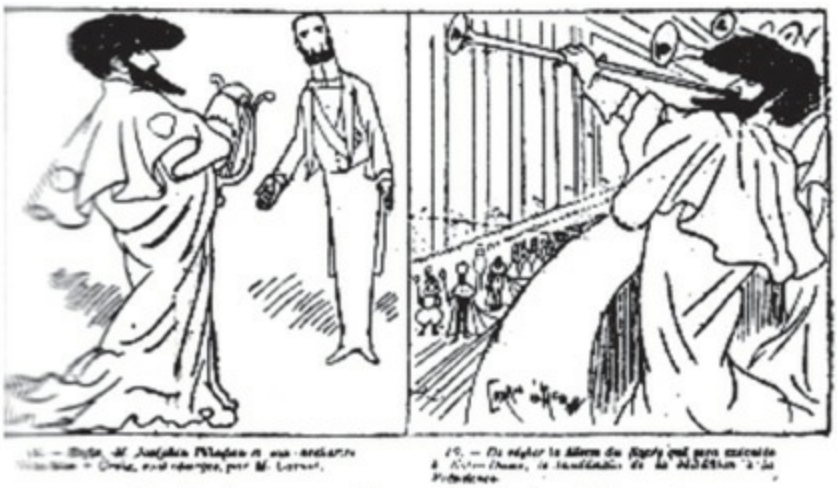
De Guaïta, astonished and dismayed, told Péladan he had violated every traditional Rosicrucian tenet by identifying a universal principle with a particular church, and that he was therefore "an apostate Rosicrucian." This did not bother Péladan, whose order soon enjoyed fabulous success. He had read the mood of the times and read it well. His aesthetic combination of Catholicism and magical mystery combined with the redemptive power of art was something suddenly attractive and highly commercial; it still is.

Péladan tried to mend the bridges, but de Guaïta, like a spurned lover, could see no point in a rapprochement that would reestablish the dominance of Péladan in his life. While Péladan went from success to success (how galling!), de Guaïta began to lose heart, eventually returning to his family home in the Moselle, where his parents shook their heads at his ruinous

occult past and where the marquis died prematurely, at the age of thirty-six.

Péladan used his order to further an explosion in artistic inventiveness. Backed initially by the money and suave intellect of Antoine de la Rochefoucauld, Péladan established his Salons de la Rose+Croix in 1892. The Salons exhibited the work of artists of the caliber of Félicien Rops, Alexandre Séon, Fernand Khnopff, Odilon Redon, Jean Delville, Félix Vallotton, Charles Filiger, and many others. The preferred style was that now known as Symbolism, in some respects a movement in pictorial representation somewhat undervalued by those students of art history who tend to follow up Impressionism with Expressionism. In fact, the Symbolists were often inspired by a theory of Platonic abstraction that would later be demystified to some extent by abstract artists. However, while art may be classed in schools, artists seldom attend the official lessons.

One of the regular attendees of the salons, who wrote a body of music with specific usage in Rose+Croix ritual settings, was the wonderful figure of Erik Satie, who would walk daily the great distance from his elementary digs in the dark streets of Charenton to play piano in the bars of Montmartre for peanuts. Nowadays, when we hear his extraordinarily “gnostic,” even nostalgic “Gymnopédies” and “Gnossiens,” we may be suddenly wafted back to the strange, erotic, and spiritual atmosphere of Péladan’s exotic experiments in literature, painting, theater, and music that dominated much of the Parisian art world in the last, decadent decade of civilization. Just add Debussy’s “Clair de lune” and “Girl with the Flaxen Hair,” and you have the soundtrack of a film that ought to be made (preferably by a poet like me).



Caricature par CARAN D'ACHE (*Figaro*).

Caricatures of Péladan and his Rosicrucian orchestra from the pen of “Caran d’Ache” in the newspaper *Figaro*.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a century earlier in England, had asserted that the function of the imagination was “to disembody the soul of fact.” This was not only a theory of romanticism (Péladan adored and popularized the works of Richard Wagner in France) but also a theory of Péladan’s divine abstractionism.

The principle of Péladan’s abstract art is alchemical and gnostic. You separate the gross from the fine; you seek the essential idea of which the material form is an expression. You take the eye from the world of matter to the world of spirit. You unveil the truth behind the image, the soul within the fact, the spirit hidden in matter. You fill your cup with the blood of the ancient Grail whose contents are a divine union of the above and the below. You bring *gnosis* forth *from* the art of creation *by* the act of creation and self-sacrifice before the inner truth. The true artist crucifies his ordinary self to uncover the faculty of vision, the light of the world.

This was the esoteric theory of the art of the new age. Sadly, after the First World War, it lay forgotten, buried beneath the rubble of destruction. The “new age” was forgotten as the atonal, fractured rhythm of the Krupp armaments factory drowned out the subtle perfections and doomed, yearning tenderness of an already vanished era. The Symbolists wrote and painted their own requiem. Cause of death: fashion and fear.

Neither Péladan nor his associate the Symbolist composer Claude Debussy

survived the Great War. Both died in 1918.

Rosicrucianism, however, did not die.

SEVENTEEN

THE AGE OF INSANITY

It has been said that too much sanity is madness. In pursuing rational objectives without any corresponding balance or spiritual context, progressive logic may lead to a breakdown where a supposed rational good simply generates an evil in practice. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said that strong beliefs are prison houses of the mind—and the twentieth century had its fill of strong beliefs rigidly and suicidally maintained; Nazism and Communism are just two of the most famous new dogmas. It is salutary to consider that "Reason" and "Progress" pursued in cold isolation may simply be the harbingers of insanity. Orson Welles was fond of quoting filmmaker Jean Renoir to the effect that "everyone [including the psychopath] has his reasons." The goodness or otherwise of "science"' depends on whose hand is on the trigger. Science itself cannot provide much of a moral or spiritual perspective for its operation, being in part no more than the product of a logical imperative: Know!

RUDOLF STEINER

In the decade and a half before the First World War, the most impressive figure to emerge with a powerful Rosicrucian buttress to his philosophy and practice was undoubtedly the Austrian philosopher, Theosophist, and scientist Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925).

Steiner is now most famous for the schools and theory of education that he pioneered—schools that stress the natural, inner development of the child as a spiritual being fit for service in the world of acculturated nature. But Steiner has also been highly influential in farms (biodynamic farming), hospitals,

communities for the handicapped, medical practices, banks, architectural practices, businesses, and not least on the development of the Christian Community.

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy.

The Christian Community is the church that came into being as a result of Steiner's engaging with German theologians and frustrated evangelicals after the First World War. Pastors like Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeyer (1872–1938) and Dr. Christian Geyer were dismayed at the lack of Christian spirituality in the churches and asked Steiner how spiritual renewal might be brought to the church.

The result of their deep engagement was a new church, the Christian Community, founded with Steiner's help. It is important to emphasize that this new church should not be seen as the ecclesiastical wing of the Anthroposophical movement.

In 1917 Steiner had maintained, "We should never behave as if the quest for spiritual knowledge were a substitute for the practice of religion and the religious life." He encouraged Christians to take the sacraments and live according to their inherited religious traditions. Anthroposophy could deepen that life and give it practical as well as interior, spiritual outlets. The practical always emerges from spiritual transformations, in Steiner's thinking.

Nevertheless, the founders of the Christian Community wanted a new church system, and Steiner helped them. The Christian Community represented some unusual features—for example, a dedication to St. John rather than the Petrine succession, freedom of belief and interpretation, and

seven sacraments, esoterically understood. At the time of its establishment in 1922, it was the first Christian church since the late antique Gnostics to include women at the altar, serving as priestesses alongside the priests. There are now pastors of the Christian Community operating in Germany, France, the United States, Canada, Argentina, and Brazil.

Steiner's understanding of the religious life was undoubtedly charged with his idiosyncratic inner encounter with a being he took to have incarnated under the "motto" Christian Rosenkreuz, but who had, he believed, other nominal identities, such as the very remarkable Comte de Saint- Germain (?–1784).

LE COMTE DE SAINT-GERMAIN

Curiosities surrounding the mysterious count's birth and ever-youthful appearance gave rise in his lifetime to the idea that he was a supernaturally sustained being, a perennial adept. In fact, he first appeared to history in a letter of November 22, 1735, sent from The Hague to one of England's foremost collectors and natural philosophers, Sir Hans Sloane. St. Germain, in need of funds, offered the collector an incunable.

St. Germain suffered death like everyone else. He was buried in the Nicolaikirche in Eckernförde on February 22, 1784, having been supported in a very friendly manner by Freemason, and supporter of Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen, Landgraf Carl von Hessen-Kassel. According to the landgrave's memoirs (*Mémoirs de mon temps,* 1861), St. Germain was the son of Rakoczy II of Transylvania.

Other clues given by St. Germain himself enable us to obtain a rational picture of his origins. It is likely that he was the child of an illegitimate union between the seventeen-year-old prince Rakoczy and Princess Violante, descended from the Wittelsbach dynasty of Bavaria. The princess had been sent to Florence to marry Gian de' Medici's homosexual brother at the same time as Prince Rakoczy visited the city. As Jean Overton Fuller writes in *The Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism,* "One imagines that Gian could have spared an incunable and a Raphael [St. Germain later sold a Raphael to keep himself alive] as gifts to the boy who had been given into his charge."[1]

Nevertheless, as a result of tales told about him and his peculiar habits (his vegetarianism meant he declined dinner invitations—even from King Louis XV—and so he was thought not to require refreshment!), and, above all, his skills in "miraculous" dyeing techniques, the removal of flaws from diamonds, the creation of a yellow metal called "similor," his interest in longevity, his peacemaking moves on behalf of the French government, and his general brilliance and philosophical acuity—all combined to give him the luster of a Great Adept. The period in which he manifested—the era of high-grade Masonry and neo-Rosicrucianism—rendered it certain that one such as he would enter the annals of legend.

The bloating of the legend was further exacerbated by the interest in him shown by the omnivorous, if fussy, matriarch of the Theosophical Society, Madame Blavatsky (1831–1891), and other leading members of her influential society, of which Rudolf Steiner was himself a member.

Steiner took a great deal of his language from Theosophy—often, one intuits, at the expense of his own vision and voice. He was also co-editor of a Theosophical journal, *Lucifer-Gnosis,* which served the German branch of the Theosophical Society. The credulity of leading Theosphists, their missionary hunger to acquire as much evidence for spiritual and paranormal activity as possible, made them treat legends not with cool skepticism or practical wisdom, but as "covers for even deeper and more astonishing supernatural magic, hidden wisdom, and ever-more-entangled theosophical mystery." This tendency, along with an instatiable appetite for systematizing diverse spiritual traditions and mythologies, led Theosophical writings into the most bizarre logical complexities, creating a labyrinthdiscourse that could be sustained only with the complete abandonment of a sense of humor and that very precious endowment of wisdom known as common sense.

Thus, Madame Blavatsky's "Mahatma Letters" revealed in 1881 that her spirit guide Koot Hoomi, who apparently dwelled in the Himalayas (or indeed on another plane altogether), but most surely lodged regularly in Blavatsky's mind, had informed theosophist Alfred Percy Sinnett (1840–1921) that the Comte de Saint-Germain was the continuer of the teachings of Christian Rosenkreuz. This supposed revelation came to be a kind of spiritual dogma among members of the society and was accepted as such by Rudolf Steiner himself.

It should be said in Steiner's favor that while he was prepared to believe things that made interior sense to him, he was not infinitely credulous. Thus, when Theosophical apostle Annie Besant (1847–1933) attempted to force acceptance of the Hindu youth Krishnamurti upon Theosophists worldwide as the new World Teacher, an incarnation of the Christ principle, Steiner rejected the leadership's instructions as an "absurdity." Steiner was then barred from the Theosophical Society (1913) and so formed his own Anthroposophical Society, asserting that Western spiritual and material problems needed a primarily Western, not Hindu, approach.

Rosicrucianism was, of course, the principal vehicle or brand name of the time for the esoteric traditions that had taken root in the West since the Middle Ages—including, as Steiner himself would argue, Christianity.

Thus, Rosicrucianism became for Steiner an unavoidable and vital part of his teachings. Indeed, since the time of Nikolay Novikoff in the late eighteenth century, perhaps no other exponent of Rosicrucianism so strongly exercised the spirit of social idealism in practical service to humanity than did Rudolf Steiner. For him, social idealism was the practical outcome of the esoteric core of his teachings. Steiner was absolutely committed to the spiritual evolution of the human race through education and spiritually integrated practice. His teachings, while frequently of an esoteric kind, were nonetheless offered openly, without exclusive masonic-style structures. In this respect, his life is rather reminiscent of that of St. Paul the Apostle.

Educated at Vienna's Technische Hochschule, Steiner had specialized in mathematics and science, soon developing a great interest in Goethe's theory of the world, itself partly inspired by the writings of Gottfried Arnold, which we discussed at the beginning of chapter 14.

In 1891, a year before Péladan initiated his Salons de la Rose+Croix, Steiner received his Ph.D. from the University of Rostock, already convinced that a new spiritual science was a real, and philosophically rational, possibility. In this belief, he was arguably more in tune with the minds of Johann Valentin Andreae and Comenius than any other figure between that time and his own. Steiner adopted an intellectually rigorous approach to his work, promoting his ideas of spiritual science in workers' nightschool lectures as well as to groups of Theosophists.

However, his system of Anthroposophy, while drinking much from the

multifarious streams that have flowed into Rosicrucianism, cannot properly be called Rosicrucian, even though the figure of Christian Rosenkreuz was important to Steiner himself and is still important to students of Steiner's thoughts and methods.

Indeed, the importance of the Rosicrucian encounter appears many times in Steiner's lectures and writings, but was perhaps never put in more personal terms than in this extract from a lecture given by Steiner at Neuchâtel on September 28, 1911:

> It will be my task to tell you today something about the work of Christian Rosenkreuz. Beginning in the thirteenth century, it has continued to this day and will continue to all eternity.
>
> The first act consisted in what we heard yesterday about the Initiation of Christian Rosenkreuz himself and what took place between the "College" of the Twelve and the Thirteenth. When Christian Rosenkreuz was born again in the fourteenth century, in an incarnation which lasted for more than a hundred years, his work consisted chiefly in teaching those who were the pupils of the Twelve. [According to Steiner's Theosophical interpretation, C.R. was the "Thirteenth," essentially a highly evolved etheric body whose radiations affected Earth whether incarnated or not; the Twelve sat around the Thirteenth in a circle.]
>
> During this period, few others knew Christian Rosenkreuz. This is not to be taken to mean that he did not mingle at all with other men, but only that he did not know who he was. Fundamentally speaking it has remained the same to this day; but the etheric body of Christian Rosenkreuz and its forces worked at all times within the circle of the pupils and in ever-widening circles, and many human beings today are already in a position to be influenced by it.
>
> Those whom Christian Rosenkreuz is willing to make into his pupils are selected by him in a singular way. He who has been so chosen must pay heed to some significant happening in his life—or to more than one. The circumstances connected with the choice by Christian Rosenkreuz are somewhat as follows.—A man is approaching a decisive turning-point, a karmic crisis, in his life, for example he is on the point of doing something that would lead to his death.

Such experiences take very diverse forms. The man may be walking along a path that is dangerous—perhaps he is quite near a precipice but does not see it. When he is only a few steps away from the precipice he hears a voice cry: “Stop!” with such power that he is compelled to stop, without knowing why. There may be a thousand similar cases. It must be remembered however that this is only the external sign, although it is the most important, of the outer, spiritual summons. The inner summons depends on whether the one chosen has concerned himself with spiritual matters, with some form of spiritual science. The outer occurrence of which I have told you is a fact in the physical world but it does not originate from a human voice. The happening is always in such a form that the person concerned knows with certainty that the voice came from the spiritual world.

. . . Since that moment a second life has been added to the first. You must regard this second life as a gift bestowed upon you, and you must conduct it accordingly.

When such an experience has the inner effect of making a man regard his life from that moment onwards as a gift bestowed upon him, this makes him into a follower of Christian Rosenkreuz, for that is the way in which Christian Rosenkreuz summons such souls.

And one who can remember an experience of this kind is able to say to himself: “Christian Rosenkreuz has beckoned to me from the spiritual world, indicating that I belong to his stream. Christian Rosenkreuz has added to my karma the possibility of having such an experience.”—That, then, is how Christian Rosenkreuz chooses his pupils; that is how he chooses those who are to belong to his work. Anyone who has had this experience consciously, says to himself: “A path was pointed out to me then, a path which I must follow, striving to discover how I may place my powers in the service of Rosicrucianism.”

Those who have not understood the beckoning call will do so later on—for he to whom that call has once gone forth will not again be free from it.

That a man can have an experience of this kind is due to the fact that between his last death and his present birth, he was together with Christian Rosenkreuz in the spiritual world. It was then that we were

chosen by Christian Rosenkreuz; it was he who implanted within us an impulse of will which leads us now to these experiences. That is the way in which spiritual connections are established.

Christian Rosenkreuz and the College of the Twelve gathered together the fruits of the different religions of the world. The effect of this will be the discovery that everything imparted by the several religions, everything their adherents have striven and longed for, is to be found in the Christ Impulse. Evolution through the next three thousand years will consist in creating and promoting understanding of the Christ Impulse.

From the twentieth century onwards, all religions will, in their essence, be united in the Rosicrucian Mystery. This will become a possibility in the course of the next three thousand years, because it will no longer be necessary to base the teaching given to mankind upon what is contained in documents; through actual perception, through actual vision of the Christ, men will themselves be able to understand the event experienced by Paul at the gate of Damascus. To humanity itself will come the experience of Paul.

We can be fairly certain that it was a lecture very much of this kind that called another man who would make the Rosicrucian message of Steiner's lectures the centerpiece of his own Rosicrucian system.

The son of a German immigrant baker whose parents moved to Denmark, Carl Grashof's *nom de plume* "Max Heindel" hid his humble origins, as the true origins of his own system were likewise obscured. Attending Steiner's Theosophical lectures in Berlin in the early 1900s, the Dane must have made careful notes, because the system he founded was clearly built on Steiner's insights and inherited ideas. Even the language and peculiarly Theosophical modes of expression employed by Steiner appeared later in his work and in the discourse of those who followed him.

Can you "plagiarize" the truth (if that is how you see it)?

MAX HEINDEL (CARL LOUIS FREDRIK GRASHOF)

Following reception of Steiner's teaching in Berlin, Max Heindel (1865–

1919) claimed that he then received an initiation at the hands of aweinspiring Rosicrucian adepts in a castle, fitted elaborately for the purpose, somewhere in Germany, to which he was taken by a mysterious figure, whose identity, naturally, was—in “true Rosicrucian form”—secret.

It would seem most likely that this initiation took place in Heindel’s imagination or in his dreams, since it so closely conforms to the basic format of the mythic scenario repeated by self-selecting hierophants of the mysteries of the period when asked to explain their peculiar authority to speak on profound matters without theological or academic training. Why, they had heard the *Voice itself!* Like Christ, they felt empowered to “speak with authority and not as the scribes.”

In the sixteenth century, such persons would have been called prophets—false or true depending on whether they were false or true—but the word *prophet* was not, at the turn of the twentieth century, a fashionable one.

However, it remains most likely that Heindel’s light got switched on in a plain lecture room in the very physical presence of the very real Dr. Rudolf Steiner rather than in a windblown castle bedecked like a scene from a Gothic horror movie. Steiner’s call had turned him on, and since the soul’s true vision is infinite, what is a castle or two between brothers of the Invisible College, summoned by Christian Rosenkreuz himself? Like St. Paul’s own claimed ascension to the “third heaven,” perhaps, he knew not whether it was in the body or out of it. Such ambiguity is perennial in Gnostic ascent experiences, whether imaginary or not.

Steiner as he appeared at the time Max Heindel saw him lecturing to workers' educational classes before 1909.

Perhaps Wagner's music was to blame.

Anyhow, Heindel was fired up with his new acquisition of knowledge and decided to take it somewhere where the name Steiner was not much in currency, and where he could establish his own order the Max Heindel way. The United States was, if not the New Age, undoubtedly the New World, and it offered much to the entrepreneur with a unique product to sell.

Heindel began his first Rosicrucian group in the United States in Columbus, Ohio, in 1908, but soon found that he needed a book for people to focus on: a *new* book. He duly came up with the eccentric writing around which he could build his future. Max Heindel's *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* appeared before the American public in 1909, while European powers agreed a formula for Serbia to renounce its claims to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Far from the perennial disputes of the Old World, Heindel proclaimed to the citizens of the new that esoteric Christianity was nothing less than the coming world religion (as Steiner had prophesied). In this proclamation, Heindel also reflected Rudolf Steiner's dissatisfaction with the Theosophical Society's persistent preference for Eastern religions whose doctrines did not, according to Steiner, fundamentally accord with the highly individualistic *this-world-centerdness* of the Western psyche and which, anyhow, were resistant to Western science and technology and the progressive beat that came naturally to the West.

Heindel's mode of instruction involved a correspondence course with an emphasis on spiritual healing and selfless help to one's neighbor. Probationers had to observe silence. Alcohol and smoking were forbidden, while the bestial instincts connected with sex were to be conquered.

According to Heindel's retelling of Steiner's intuitions, there exist twelve great spiritual hierarchies to assist in humankind's evolution, including the most elevated members of the Rosicrucian Order. Ideally, a Rosicrucian circle consisted of twelve brothers gathered around a thirteenth who connects to a higher central council (have we not read this somewhere before?). Seven brethren fulfill good deeds on Earth, while five remain at work on the inner planes. (It is worth mentioning that in the recently discovered Sethian

Gnostic Gospel of Judas, Judas is called specifically—by a somewhat Rosicrucianist Jesus—the Thirteenth Disciple: a striking, almost anachronistic coincidence.)

There is great deal of astrology in Heindel's system, and his book demonstrated his conviction that he had somehow visited the inner worlds of distant planets, exploring their peculiar inhabitants and environments; his adventures make for curious reading. Similar ideas occur in some of Steiner's lectures. For example, in a lecture delivered by Steiner at Neuchâtel on December 18, 1912, Steiner referred to the Mission of Gautama Buddha on Mars (a phrase that sounds curiously akin to some "lost" album from the late 1960s by Jimi Hendrix).

Steiner asserted:

> A conference of the most advanced individualities was called together by Christian Rosenkreuz. His most intimate pupil and friend, the eminent teacher Buddha, participated in these counsels and in the decisions that were reached. At that spiritual conference it was resolved that henceforth Buddha would dwell on Mars and there unfold his influence and activity. He transferred his work to Mars in the year 1604, and performed a deed there similar to that of Christ in the Mystery of Golgotha on earth. Christian Rosenkreuz knew what the work of Buddha on Mars would signify for the entire cosmos, what his teachings of nirvana and liberation from the earth would signify on Mars.

It is impossible to avoid observing a less-than-scientific approach to this matter. Indeed, its questionable fruitfulness to the world of knowledge, expressed in Heindel's enthusiasm for astrology, has contributed less to the advancement of scientific space exploration and considerably more to the spread of astrology throughout the United States. But, then, the Californian astrologer's penetration of the spheres that bind humankind to Earth was considerably less violent, noisy, or expensive—if doubtless less real—than that designed to demonstrate John F. Kennedy's public teaching, "Whatever mankind must undertake, free men must fully share." Nevertheless, a journey through the unreal is an unreal journey.

Heindel also took from Steiner the belief in reincarnation and karma,

familiar to Theosophists and to Steiner's Anthroposophical Society. These beliefs substantially transformed the nature of the Christianity taught in the system.

References to "the Christ Impulse," for example, are certainly heterodox; and I am not sure if Andreae and Johann Arndt would have found themselves in communion with such notions as Heindel's idea that Christ be seen as the highest initiate of the "solar period" who incarnated at the baptism of the human Jesus (the old heresy of adoptionism).

Furthermore, Heindel's Jesus figure had to atone for negative karma through the suffering of crucifixion. This doctrine is reminiscent of those second-century-AD Gnostics who made a distinction between the physical being who was crucified and the pneumatic "living Jesus" who watched it all happening from the vantage point of inner planes or higher aeons, laughing at those who thought they had "nailed" him. This aspect of the Cosmo-Conception is a revived Gnostic teaching and can hardly be considered a new revelation. The concept of "bad karma" would, of course, become a staple of the hippie discourse that so irritated people with experience of World War II conditions.

According to Heindel, the universe consisted of seven worlds: the world of God, of the primal spirits, of the spirits of life, of the divine spirit, of thoughts, of the spirits of desires, and the lowest bodies. The human being evolved through seven periods. Each period was ruled by a planet. The seed of the final race was to come through the collective experience of the American melting pot; in the meantime, the United States had no racial spirit of its own.

Heindel copied Steiner's view that Christian Rosenkreuz was the symbolic name of an advanced spiritual teacher, remaining in touch with humanity through a series of incarnations, being particularly close to earthly life so as to influence the figures of Sir Francis Bacon, Jacob Böhme, Goethe, and Wagner (more or less the usual suspects).

The headquarters of Heindel's order, the Rosicrucian Fellowship, were established at Mt. Ecclesia, Oceanside, California, on Christmas Day 1920, almost two years after Heindel's death. A twelve-sided white temple was constructed there. The cross of the order has seven roses placed around it. In 1995, it was reported that the fellowship was enjoyed by eight thousand

members worldwide, in the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Brazil, and the United Kingdom.

The large Dutch international order the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, was built out of a Dutch branch of the Rosicrucian Fellowship that broke with the American parent body and reoriented itself about the teachings of its founders, as we shall see.

HARVEY SPENCER LEWIS

H. Spencer Lewis (1883–1939) was an American advertising professional with a strong desire to make contact with the original Brothers of the Rose Cross, or their descendants. This urge seems to get right into some people's self-consciousness to the extent that they cannot imagine they are not of critical interest to the supernal order. Their lives are subsequently interpreted by themselves (and their followers) as being guided from on high.

Lewis provided a number of accounts of how it was that he came to represent the mystical and mostly invisible brethren in the United States of America. The most common story begins in the year 1909, the year in which Heindel's *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* was published.

According to the story, Spencer Lewis was with his father in the south of France, where he was somehow led to the company of a venerable hierophant living in an ancient tower in Toulouse. (Did he know that Péladan claimed Toulouse as the source of his initiation?) This sounds remarkably similar to Heindel's story, but it may be sympathetically concluded that this is just the way the Masters work. The Masters apparently like castles and old places; you never get to see them in inner cities or state housing projects.

Anyhow, in the mysterious heart of old Toulouse, the venerable hierophant recognized the essential character of Lewis and initiated him into the ancient Ordo Rosae Crucis. Lewis was then, he asserted, privileged to attend a meeting of Illuminati, whereupon he was commissioned to spread the Rose Cross mysteries to America. He had, he wanted his subordinates to believe, entered nothing less than the "most powerful organization in the world," whose associates had included kings of France and England, emperors and grand masters—in other words, the usual story.

In another story, Lewis reassembled members of a Society of Rosicrucian

Studies, under the guise of a psychoanalytic practice, whose members were initiated in France between 1900 and 1909.

Lewis's Ancient and Mystical Ordo Rosae Crucis (AMORC) did not make a public appearance until May 1915, when a lodge was established in New York. Lewis declared that the Grand Council of the Ordre Rose Croix of France had named him supreme Grand Dignitary of the order for North America.

Every new order likes to offer something different along with the tried-and-trusted elements of the product, a lesson an advertising man was only too likely to grasp to the full. Lewis's order declared in 1916 that it had been founded long before Christian Rosenkreuz. Its founder was the pharaoh Tutmosis III (sixteenth century BC), and its world center had been Memphis —a conceit borrowed in part from the fringe masonic Order of Memphis and Mizraim, which operated a ninety-seven-degree system at the time.

In another AMORC document of 1916, it was reported that the Supreme Chief of the order was living in Tibet. This idea might have come from the works of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre. Saint-Yves held that all valid mystical initiations stemmed from an invisible synarchist paradise in the Himalayas.[2] Alternatively, it might have been the well-known ideas of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (guided by an invisible Mahatma) that inspired it.

These were, in any case, the staple ideas of mystical societies at the time, ideas that gave otherwise commonplace Hindu practices such as raja yoga and hatha yoga and words like *guru* a *frisson* of magical transcendentalism to Westerners bored by, or resistant to, the progress of Western science and technology.

Lewis, incidentally, also had it put about that he knew the whereabouts of Christian Rosenkreuz's coffin, an object allegedly sent to the Pacific coast of America in the seventeenth century. Indeed, what is more, he had found the German's intact body himself! This experience could only mean one thing. He must be proclaimed sole Imperator of AMORC for the United States—and the world. As is the case with so many persons chosen by higher powers to lead the willing, he was in fact self-selected. People are inclined to believe in what other people believe themselves to be—so long as the goods and chattels seem to back it up. Human credulity is endless; people need to believe in *something*.

In San Francisco, in association with an Episcopalian priest, Lewis established what he called the Pristine Church of Rosicruciae, of which he was, of course, bishop, with power to lay down a liturgy and to ordain priests.

Naturally, there were problems with claiming so much power for oneself. Just one example here concerned the figure of Sylvester Gould.

In April 1880, two American colleges whose activities derived from the SRIA initiative in Great Britain established a High Council for the United States called the Societas Rosicruciana Republicae Americae (later called the Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis, or SRICF), which is still active as a kind of Masonic literary society. This body authorized a college in Boston in 1880.

Sylvester C. Gould, a member of the Boston college, was editor of a periodical called *The Rosicrucian Brotherhood* (1907–09). Together with some other Rosicrucians, he founded a new society, the Societas Rosicruciana in America, with degrees common to the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer and the Golden Dawn. It survives to this day, publishing books on Rosicrucian subjects and a journal.

Gould died in 1909. While Lewis regarded himself as Gould's spiritual heir, the leadership eventually passed to Dr. George Winslow Plummer. But Lewis had his eye on the Societas Rosicruciana in America.

By 1920, Lewis was established in San José, California, with a teaching institution and a radio transmitter. As AMORC's Rex Imperator, and being mindful of the Rosicrucian competition in the United States, he began a long search whose intention was to bring all the Rosicrucians in America (and even in the world, if possible) under AMORC's umbrella. Unfortunately for Lewis, he was by no means alone in this ambition.

Ever eager to contact genuine Rosicrucian survivals and gain charter authority for his own claims, H. Spencer Lewis soon found himself in unusual company.

Lewis was irritated to hear via the grapevine that Englishman, senior fringe-Freemason, and occult scholar Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), inspector general of John Yarker's Rite of Memphis and Misraim, was living in New York, asserting his rights as Outer Head of a venerable order that, according to him, encompassed the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross, whose

profoundest secrets he knew. The order in question went by the name of the Ordo Templi Orientis, or Order of Oriental Templars, a scion of the Great White Brotherhood for whom Crowley spoke.

The O.T.O. (as it is generally known) was first outlined by German fringe-Mason Theodore Reuss (1855–1923) in 1906. Reuss had been a member of an occult circle first convened in about 1895 by German businessman Carl Kellner (1851–1905) and his wife to practice hatha yoga, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (for recovery of memory of past incarnations), and Tantra yoga (wherein Frau Kellner was worshipped as goddess).

After Kellner's death, Reuss, already a member of the very small German branch of the fringe-Masonic Rite of Memphis and Mizraim, attempted to establish the sexual yogic teachings he had learned with Kellner as the highest degrees of a new Templarist fringe-Masonic system.

The central conceit of the order lay in its unique possession of secrets allegedly discovered through the Templars' sojourn in the East—and known to a few adepts in the West, such as Christian Rosenkreuz. This knowledge had always been known to certain groups of adepts, including the "Johannite" Jesus Christ and the "beloved disciple" (John), and although Jesus Christ was blasphemed by the (Nazarene) Christians ignorant of the *gnosis*, the secrets had nonetheless passed on through occult-oriented circles.

The secrets concerned sexual magic (or as Crowley spelled it, sexual *magick*). The VIII° (autoerotic masturbation) and the IX° (male and female intercourse) involved sexual fluids for magical purposes, such as smearing on a sigil, a talisman, or an image of the phallus (according to the doctrine, the sun's image on earth) or for consumption as a sacrament. The XI° (IX° inverted) was reserved for homosexual acts.

Orgasm was the means by which, on the mystical level, *atman* (individual soul) could be theoretically united with Brahman (supreme reality), and on the magical level, a supreme effort of will could be directed at the climactic moment onto an interior image or symbol of something desired by the magician and projected as a new creation into the magical plane of activity. Based on the idea that the universe is permeated by an invisible fluid or etheric substance of infinite plasticity that responds to magical acts, changes in nature or mind should follow from successfully and properly performed acts of willed magick.

This was probably not the sort of thing that Lewis had in mind when he met Crowley in New York on at least two occasions in midsummer 1918. As Crowley recalled the meetings: “He [Lewis] cast about everywhere for authority and when I first met him in New York in 1918 E.V. [Era Vulgari, Crowley’s expression for the “vulgar” or Christian Era] he was showing a charter supposed to be from French Rosicrucians in Toulouse. . . . This ridiculous forgery . . . Lewis didn’t know French!”[3]

After meeting Lewis, Crowley drafted a paper, intending to send its contents to Lewis. Apparently, it never arrived. The draft turned up again in another context seventeen years later. Had Lewis read it, he would have been interested to contemplate Crowley’s offer of membership of the O.T.O., or his primary order the A.˙.A.˙.,[*2] or another Illuminist order. This briefest of associations would come back to haunt Lewis.

Nevertheless, the Rex Imperator of the United States must have been intrigued by the possibilities involved in working with a Germanic order, or obtaining authority thereby to pursue his schemes, because in July 1921, H. Spencer Lewis received from Reuss a certificate making him an honorary member of the Ordo Templi Orientis (33º, 90º, 95º [Memphis and Misraim], VIIº [O.T.O.]). In 1921, Lewis not only called the O.T.O. the “outer façade” of Rosicrucianism but was also happy to call himself an Illustrious Knight (Templar) of the Order of Kadosch, and Companion of the Holy Grail, in conformity with his O.T.O. membership.

Reuss set a lot of store by his (one-sided) relationship with Lewis and was impressed by Lewis’s resources. Being broke and ill, Reuss hoped to obtain funding from the well-off American, but Lewis was very canny in this regard and moved carefully. He knew all about the arts of persuasion.

Remaining cool, Lewis was nonetheless mindful of the fact that Crowley was Outer Head of the O.T.O. for the British Isles. In May 1921, Reuss had agreed that Crowley’s “magical son” Charles Stansfield Jones (1886–1950) function as O.T.O. representative (Xº) in North America. Lewis appears to have seen Jones’s presence in North America as suggesting a rivalry of jurisdiction. Lewis had no connection with Crowley’s wing of the O.T.O., and knowing that Jones was Crowley’s disciple may have made him wary.

Reuss, on the other hand, wanted Lewis’s cooperation, and this may have been a factor in Reuss’s later spats with Crowley. The aim seems to have

been to keep Crowley—or more particularly his magical authority—out of America.

In September 1921 Reuss and Lewis loosely collaborated on an idea to construct a new Rosicrucian framework, The AMORC World Union Council. Reuss had a sketch of the proposed council's periodical made under the title *TAWUC* (the council's acronym). Oddly, this sounds very much like the name of the supreme angel of the Yezidis, the so-called Peacock Angel, Melek (Lord) *Tawus*. (Crowley regarded Thelema, his synthesis of religious philosophies, as having some undefined authority from the ancient "god of the Yezidis.")

That aside, Reuss was hoping Lewis would give him money to fund the periodical's production (and to save him from starvation); Lewis did not like the idea of funding the German Outer Head of the O.T.O. Reuss, for his part, was acutely conscious of Lewis's lack of enthusiasm for their joint project and must have attributed the resistance to his association with Aleister Crowley and C. S. Jones.

In a letter of October 25, 1921, Reuss informed Lewis that he had withdrawn Crowley's right to act in the O.T.O.'s name. He had also closed contact with C. S. Jones. This letter would prove useful to Lewis in the future, if not to Theodore Reuss, who died in penury in 1923.

After Reuss's death, Lewis showed a renewed interest in an alliance with the O.T.O. He was not, however, interested in associating with either Crowley's O.T.O. or that wing of the order operating out of Switzerland. The Swiss O.T.O. had already been approached by Lewis's great rival, Reuben Swinburne Clymer (1878–1966), whose Fraternitas Rosae Crucis (founded in the early 1920s) was an ideological descendant of P. B. Randolph's system through the latter's disciple, Freeman B. Dowd.

Clymer's book was called the *Book of Rosicruciae*. Having written it, he set his sights on Lewis. Lewis's and Clymer's disputes would traverse the 1920s and 1930s in a most unedifying manner. In the meantime, Lewis was in contact with bookseller Heinrich Tränker, head of the German wing of the O.T.O. In August 1930 the two men planned a Pansophia International Rosicrucian Council. This would gather under the whirling banners of both the O.T.O. and AMORC. Furthermore, they would send out a "second *Fama*," calling for those who felt themselves so called to contact the

fraternity. They, of course, were the fraternity to contact.

What Andreae or Comenius would have made of this pretense one can only guess. As for the use of the word “Pansophia,” it may have been more inspired by competition with Arnaldo Krumm-Heller’s use of the word for *his* numerous orders than with the educational benefits to be enjoyed from the reforms of Comenius.

Lewis was still not satisfied in his search for “real Rosicrucians” (was he not inspired by his own claims?). Four years later, in a great bid to trump Clymer’s ace, Lewis participated in the assembly of an even greater union. The event took place in Brussels, and the resulting association was called the Federatio Universalis Dirigens Ordines Societasque Initiationis, or FUDOSI for short.

FUDOSI (which would last officially until 1951) brought Lewis into fraternal relations with the heirs of Papus’s Rosicrucians, with Martinists, with members of the Rectified Scottish Rite, and with the Église Gnostique Universelle, founded by Jules-Benoît Doinel (1842–1902), whose consecrated bishops had once included two members of de Guaïta’s Rosicrucian order, Papus himself and Paul Sédir (1871–1926).

Clymer countered with his own rival umbrella organization, FUDOFSI, and the battle between America’s arch-Rosicrucians raged on. In the following year, 1935, Clymer lost a major lawsuit against Lewis, and Aleister Crowley went bankrupt. Curiously, the two events became related.

Clymer wrote a book full of outrage against AMORC, entitled *The Rosicrucian Fraternity in America* (note the singular). He accused Lewis of peddling forgeries and—to blacken Lewis by association—of having dealings with the notorious “black magician” Aleister Crowley, known to his followers as The Beast 666.

In the process of dealing with the bankruptcy, Crowley showed his lawyers the draft he had made offering Lewis membership in the O.T.O., considering that it would serve as a basis for extracting funds from Lewis’s by now well-endowed organization.

Crowley’s first letter to Lewis was courteous. Aware that Clymer had libelously defamed his (Crowley’s) character as a means of attacking Lewis, Crowley offered his help in the fight with Clymer. There was a great future

waiting if these problems could all be overcome.

On September 5, 1935, Crowley wrote to Raymund Andrea (Lewis's London representative), announcing that since he, Crowley, was Outer Head of the O.T.O., he was therefore chief of all Rosicrucians; AMORC was therefore his to do with as he—that is, the Secret Chiefs whom he served—thought fit.

Lewis considered the matter carefully, then countered with Theodore Reuss's assertion that he had expelled Crowley from the O.T.O. in October 1921. Furthermore, he (Lewis) was not in possession of a "charter" from the O.T.O. The so-called charter from Reuss was neither warrant nor charter, simply a certificate. There would be no money forthcoming, nor any share whatsoever in his developments in California or worldwide activities.

On December 28, 1936, Crowley tried to get Krumm-Heller to assist him in the struggle to get hold of Lewis's organization, writing that Lewis "must account for the 900,000 dollars odd which he had accrued in the last few years. Unfortunately, my people in California, although most devoted and intelligent, are not precisely men of the world and do not know how to handle big affairs. It is imperative that I should go over there and put the screws on Spencer Lewis."[4]

But he never did.

Nevertheless, Crowley continued to insist that the AMORC properties rightly belonged to him. In this belief, Crowley was doubtless buoyed up by his own self-belief that he had been appointed by the Secret Chiefs of the Great White Brotherhood to blow away all opposition by strength of will and the power of the "New Aeon" and establish himself and his doctrine as possessing inalienable global authority. This belief would not stand up in court, though it was undoubtedly a conviction. Crowley wished to unite, or reunite, all bodies of Rosicrucian provenance behind an epoch-marking spiritual revolution that would go to "the root of life." He died in 1947, before he could achieve this mighty purpose.

Of course, had Reuss given Lewis a charter on which to base his authority, rather than a certificate, history may have been very different, and Rosicrucian Park, San José, California, might today be the Country Club Crowley threatened to turn it into in a letter of January 1936 to O.T.O.

member Max Schneider in the United States.

Three years later, Harvey Spencer Lewis died amid his vast California foundation, surrounded by the world-famous temple and research laboratories of Rosicrucian Park, inspired by Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*.

H. Spencer Lewis was succeeded by his son Ralph Maxwell Lewis (1904–1987), under whose Imperatorship AMORC enjoyed a considerably less troubled future, becoming widely known for its reasonably worded advertisements in popular magazines inviting members of the public to join a body that was not a religion but a way of improving one's moral, spiritual, and psychological awareness to degrees that might be considered magical, such as telepathy. It was all white and good and came with the endorsements of past genius.

Gary L. Stewart succeeded R. M. Lewis in 1987 at the age of thirty-four, backed by Raymond Bernard of the French branch of AMORC. There ensued serious financial ructions, and in 1990 the board of directors replaced Stewart with Raymond Bernard's son, Christian, whereupon two of Stewart's supporters, Paul Walden and Ashley McFadden, established the Ancient Rosae Crucis, while Stewart himself created a Confraternity of the Rose Cross. Raymond Bernard then set up a number of organizations, including the International Committee for Charitable and Social Works (CIR CES), now presented as a humanitarian branch of a neo-Templar organization, the Sovereign Order of the Temple of Initiation.

AMORC is still the biggest neo-Rosicrucian organization in the world, with hundreds of thousands of members who advance through the order by means of a regular correspondence, self-initiation, and home-study plan.

There are, of course, dozens of other neo-Rosicrucian organizations in the world, if not out of it. One of the largest of these exists in South America, the brainchild of the aforementioned Arnaldo Krumm-Heller (1879–1949).

The Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antiqua (FRA) has been the largest Spanish-speaking neo-Rosicrcucian body, combining elements from Freemasonry, Theosophy, Gnosticism, and several systems of sex magic.

In Mexico in the 1950s, there emerged from the splits in the FRA after Krumm-Heller's death the Gnostic Movement and the Gnostic Church, founded by Víctor Manuel Gómez Rodríguez (or Samael Aun Weor, 1917–

1977). Rodríguez was a member of the Colombian FRA and a pupil of Krumm-Heller. After his death, further schisms occurred, and there are now several dozen split-offs. The Gnostic Movement, however, endeavors to maintain the traditions of Krumm-Heller's FRA.

THE LECTORIUM ROSICRUCIANUM

Now one of the largest neo-Rosicrucian organizations in the world, the Dutch-based Lectorium Rosicrucianum maintains a unique ambience and approach to the Rosicrucian tradition. While calling itself the Spiritual School, there is no doubt that to become a full member of the organization is to have freely embraced an all-encompassing religion.

The doctrines of the Lectorium are held with great seriousness, and there is an almost Protestant austerity to the doctrinal approach of the order.

Like the Steiner movement, the Lectorium has embraced a total aesthetic in its presentation of the Gnostic doctrines that sustain it. Its buildings are modern, clean, and graceful, blending in with their surroundings and giving a feeling of openness and, above all, light. Its temple, Renova, near Haarlem, is a prime example of this approach.

Light and radiance (spiritual radiation) is what the Lectorium considers itself to be all about. The word *light* is repeated many times in its literature and its mystical, if curiously anemic, heights involve the pupil becoming a selfless vessel, a kind of grail, open to higher spiritual rays that may stream through the pupil and raise him or her to the company of heaven, or higher spiritual awareness.

Another facet of its approach is a full commitment to family life. It was striking to see, in a display of children's art at Renova, for example, a child's painting depicting a human form with the writing underneath it, "*microcosmus*." They don't teach *that* at state schools!

It all started on October 1,, 1916, when Agatha Zegwaard (later Mrs. Van Warendorp-Zegwaard, 1882–1970) began her spiritual studies. Max Heindel's *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* had been translated into Dutch in 1913, and this was the work that seized her attention. She wished to join the Rosicrucian Fellowship, at that time without a Dutch center. Marrying Marius van Warendorp, like herself a teacher, in the 1920s, she began a study

group at Overtoom, Amsterdam.

In the spring of 1926, two brothers, Jan and Wim Leene from Haarlem, joined the Van Warendorp group. The eldest, Wim (b. 1892), would die of a heart attack in 1938, but his brother, Jan (1896–1968), would go on to great heights in the group and transform its doctrinal scope.

Membership steadily grew in Amsterdam, supported by a publishing initiative in Alberding Thijmstraat 4 and a "postal bookshop." Publications were given the rubric "a Publication of the Rosicrucian Society." An open bookshop was founded in February 1928, along with *The Rosy Cross* magazine and an advertising department. There were now four centers in Holland: in Amsterdam, The Hague, Haarlem, and Baarn.

In 1930, Mrs. van Warendorp's ill health thrust the Leene brothers into the leadership. When she recovered, the Leene brothers refused to let her back. The group contacted Max Heindel's widow in Oceanside, California, but Mrs Heindel supported the Leene brothers. At Bakenessergracht 13, Haarlem, the brothers began working as full-time Rosicrucians, establishing the Max Heindel Foundation in 1933.

After Heindel's death, the Rosicrucian Fellowship had split into two main factions. *Who were the true Rosicrucians?* The Dutch group was dismayed. In January 1935, the group established the Dutch headquarters of the Rosicrucian Society, the first step to secession from the American fellowship. The Leene brothers, along with C. L. J. Damme, structured a situation whereby their organization claimed to be the primary leader of Rosicrucian esotericism, temporarily centralized in Holland. This claim to global primacy of Max Heindel's Fellowship would become characteristic of the organization and led very quickly to a permanent split with the Oceanside, California, fellowship.

On September 25, 1935, Het Rozenkruisers Genootschap (the Rosicrucian Society) became institutionalized, as many Dutch Rosicrucians joined the Haarlem group. There was disagreement over the name. In 1936, they were the Order of Manichaeans; in 1941, the Jacob Boehme Gezelschap. In 1946, two names gelled: the Lectorium Rosicrucianum and the School of the Golden Rosy Cross.

By the 1950s, two figures dominated thinking in the Lectorium. They were Jan Leene (pseudonym "Jan Van Rijckenborgh," or John of the Rich Castle)

and Henny Stock-Huyser (1902–1990), whose pen name was Catharose de Petri (Cathar Rose of the Stone). These names were officially accepted by the school when they received grand mastership from Antonin Gadal (1877–1962), patriarch of the Cathar Brotherhood.

The appearance of the French neo-Cathar enthusiast Gadal transformed the Dutch movement. Gadal, president of the Syndicat d'initiative d'Ussatles-Bains (the local tourist information office), enjoyed the dual role of local teacher and historian of the Cathar movement associated with the territory, as well as being responsible for encouraging more visitors to the area. There had been a rise in tourist interest in the Carcassonne-Ariège region that had been thwarted by two world wars, to the detriment of the economy.

Before the war, Gadal had fully realized the attraction of the area to spiritualists and others looking for Cathar gnostic resonance. A mélange of history and spiritual-romantic fantasies of Cathar-Grail connections was encouraged by the writings of Déodat Roché (1877–1978), Napoléon Peyrat (1809–1881), Maurice Magre (1877–1941), and Otto Rahn (1904–1939). Rahn's book *Crusade Against the Grail* was a hit in Germany in 1933; it was published in France the following year.

The book's idea concerned an imaginary mystical Christianity and pre-Christian pagan light-*gnosis* associated with the Holy Grail to which the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Cathars had been privy, and for which they were exterminated by order of the pope. The story could be given a Nazi twist, namely that the Nazis were inheritors of a "*gnosis*" that conventional Christianity opposed (Rahn would join the S.S. in 1936).

The story of the *Crusade Against the Grail* drew not only on Gadal's eccentric theories concerning the Cathars and their peculiar usage of the caves of Lombrives and Ornolac near to his home, but also on Rahn's highly tendentious interpretation of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzifal* and the Rosicrucian Joséphin Péladan's *Le secret des troubadours* (Paris, 1906).

Péladan's book was, notably, the first to identify in explicit terms the Grail knights of *Parzifal* with the medieval Cathars, and to identify the Cathar refuge of Montségur with Wolfram's fictional Montsalvaesche. According to Wolfram, the Holy Grail was an alchemically potent stone that had come down from heaven (an image to be found in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 20). Rahn's story required only the identification of this mysterious and potent

object with the treasure of the Cathars, removed secretly at the time of the surrender of Montségur in March 1244 to create a new quest for the Holy Grail. That quest could be served by the tourist facilities of Ussat-les-Bains and Tarascon-sur-Ariège, for, according to Rahn's account, the stone was taken from Montségur to the caves of the Sabarthès in the vicinity of Gadal's home at Ussat-les-Bains.

This was all wonderfully, even providentially, convenient for Antonin Gadal.

New dimensions of magic, myth, and mystery could be added to the basic story as devotees felt fit. Thus, the area was also married to a fanciful mythology involving the great adept Christian Rosenkreuz, who was, allegedly, still in spiritual contact with seekers after truth.

The Fraternité Polaires was an occult society founded in 1929 by Frenchman Zam Bhotiva. In 1931, the Polaires were directed by an invisible Superior of the Order, the fully initiated Rosicrucian master, Italian occultist Père Julien (translated, according to Zam Bhotiva, to a remote Himalayan monastery in 1918), to seek the lost Gospel of John in the Pyrenees. The Polaires duly came to the valley of the Ariège to excavate the ruins of the castle of Lordat, with the blessing of its owner, Countess Pujol-Murat.

Joined by English spiritualist Ivan Cooke (at the behest of the discarnate spirit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle), the Polaires were convinced that Lordat was visited by Christian Rosenkreuz on his return from illumination in the East in the fifteenth century.

It would appear that Rudolf Steiner's pointed elevation of Christian Rosenkreuz among spiritualists and Theosophists—at the expense of Hindu- and Buddhist-influenced theosophies—was paying off. The West had its own masters.

Ruins of the castle of Lordat, valley of the Ariège. Spiritualists in the 1930s were convinced that Christian Rosenkreuz had stayed at this castle on his return from Damcar via Spain, in association with a sacred relic, possibly the Holy Grail.

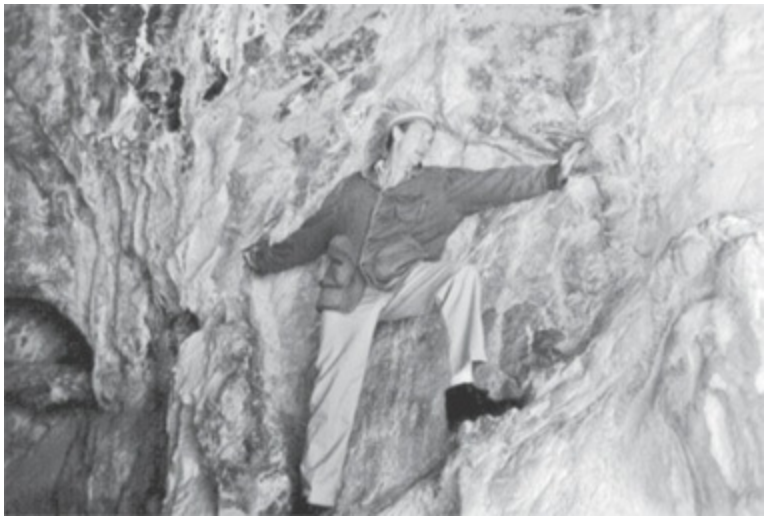
Now swap the Himalayas for the Pyrenees, and the Hidden House of the Holy Spirit comes alive once more on good European soil. Surely, the undisputed invisible Master of Western Esotericism had deposited some kind of precious treasure at Lordat because, according to the *Fama, frater C.R.* had returned to Germany via Spain. He would have had to cross the Pyrenees. The valley of the Ariège would have provided the obvious route. Rosenkreuz would hardly have missed the opportunity to deposit something of permanent spiritual significance in a place already made holy by the presence of the Cathars' magical *gnosis*—itself, according to the theory, a manifestation of the great metahistorical Work of the Great White Brotherhood.

During the 1930s, Gadal explored—and encouraged others to explore—the extraordinary cave systems around Tarascon and Ussatles- Bains. He began in his mind to associate them with Catharist initiation ceremonies, relating them to a religion he called Maneism (not Manichaeanism), a kind of Christianized Mithraism with ancient Egyptian religious overtones. This imaginary spiritual cult was in turn associated with a supposed survival of a southern French Gnostic religious presence that had upset the church fathers (such as Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, in ca. AD 180) and which, arguably, had Egyptian roots. The survival of ancient *gnosis* no doubt made the area particularly attractive to Bogomil preachers from Bulgaria who penetrated the spiritual and cultural life of the Languedoc in the twelth century. The Grail

was somehow *coming home*.

These ideas were seized on with alacrity by Jan van Rijckenborgh. His eyes were opened to a new vision: a combination of Jacob Böhme, the Rosicrucians, Freemasonry, the Cathars, a Sophia-worshipping troubadour movement, and, above all, pure Gnostics. This superattractive, allinclusive exclusive vision would take the Lectorium Rosicrucianum into global leadership of Gnostic religion and transfigured Rosicrucianism. Furthermore, the "young Gnostic brotherhood," as he and Catharose de Petri began calling the Lectorium, could now step out of the damp streets of the Netherlands and enjoy holidays and spiritual exercises (such as group singing and radiating prayer) at a refreshing spa town in the clean mountains of southwestern France, with special facilities and tours provided, added to which special Lectorium initiations could be conducted in caves with new names like "Bethlehem," where a startling purity of atmosphere could be combined with a rigorous purity of neo-Gnostic doctrine. The vast inner open space within the Lombrives cave would be dubbed "the Cathedral" by members of the Lectorium, who meet there annually for collective prayer and song.

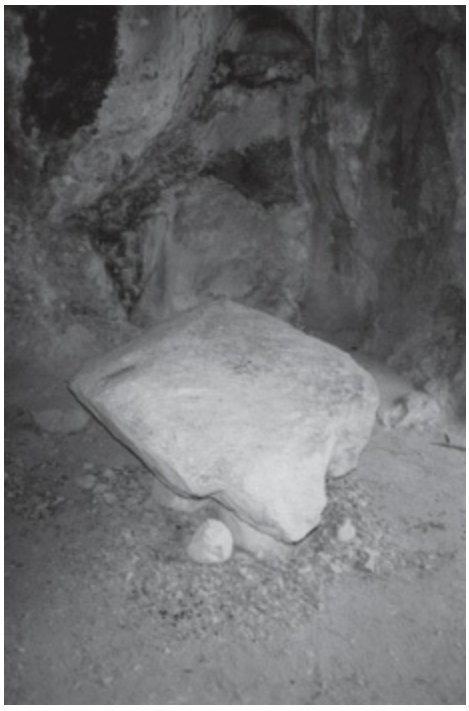
The entrance to the “Bethlehem” cave, excavated by Gadal in the 1930s, Ornolac, valley of the Ariège, southwestern France.



British artist Columba Powell discovers that Antonin Gadal’s “pentagonal” shape naturally occurring in the “Bethlehem” cave wall at Ornolac is far from geometrically perfect for human harmonic purposes. Gadal believed the shape was used at the climax to Cathar initiation rituals: the “human pentagram” may represent the “reborn man.” (Author’s photograph)

The light of the Gnostics had returned, it was asserted, in all its fullness, and the Lectorium Rosicrucianum was destined and called by God to be the absolute center of its divine radiations, summoned to serve in a world gone mad, bad, drunk, demented, TV-obsessed, drugged out, materialistic, and sexually perverted. No occultism here—just pure *gnosis*, the way Hermes Trismegistus taught it, the way it came to the pure, good spiritual reformers, Johann Valentin Andreae and their true followers, hated by the world but gifted with the insights of the Light. Amen.

Jan van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri took their mandate of grandmastership from Gadal as a spiritual commission for life, exercised by Catharose de Petri after van Rijckenborgh's death in 1968, with the assistance of Rijckenborgh's daughters Mrs. E. T. Hammelink-Leene and Els Leene. Van Rijckenborgh's son Henk started a new group with his wife, while Wim Leene's son Ham became part of the international spiritual leadership of the order.



A stone found by Gadal and moved by workmen to its supposed original site within the "Bethlehem" cave, used as a holy table for neo-Catharist ceremonial purposes.

While reading Max Heindel's work was still encouraged, members were expected to focus upon the instructional books (frequently composed in

remarkably dogmatic tones for Gnostic writings) written by the grand masters.

Van Rijckenborgh wrote extensive, idiosyncratic commentaries on the original Rosicrucian works as well as on the *Pymander* of Hermes Trismegistus. There was a determination to absorb all the many lines of Gnostic input into a single doctrinal system; thus these commentaries are more properly called “interpretations,” since the material has a preconsidered doctrine imposed upon it, deriving from a range of sources from the Western esoteric traditions including Andreae, Karl von Eckartshausen, Böhme, and the Cathars. The combination is peculiar; neither writer was a scholar in the academic sense. But religions are not founded by scholars; they are founded by believers. And few believers are scholars.

The belief system of the Lectorium, then, derives from the particular experiences of its grand masters. The Leene brothers gave up practicing astrology after World War II, so astrology does not receive as positive an endorsement as it did in Heindel’s fellowship. Furthermore, both van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri had been raised in the plain earnestness of the Dutch Reformed Church, so orthodox Christian moral teaching is a very strong component. Life is perilous, and the pupil is often close to the verge of absolute destruction. Sex is particularly threatening to the spiritual destiny of the pupil; lust is bad. Things tend to be seen in black and white, impure and pure.

Jan Leene mixed Dutch Reformed religious doctrine (he saw the Dutch Reformed Church as an “external” church) with the Theosophy of Alice A. Baily and sundry neo-Gnostic ideas often of a sometimes imaginary Cathar (or neo-Cathar) type. Quitting the Dutch Reformed Church in 1924, Jan Leene came to see the Rosicrucian tradition as containing the inner teaching that the former church lacked.

Henny Stok-Huyser had also been brought up in the Dutch Reformed pattern but was attracted by the School of the Rosy Cross in her late twenties; she was a mystic with an interest in Chinese wisdom traditions. According to her own account, a godly messenger appeared to her in the shape of a white dove after a period of contemplation. The dove told her that she must serve the Rosicrucians. A series of mystical revelations followed. She recognized Jan Leene as a spiritual brother, and he saw in her someone he could

cooperate with. When she met Antonin Gadal, he showed her a cloth with a white dove on it as a motif. This was sufficient sign for her to see Gadal as another spiritual compatriot. The doctrines now not only had a logic that satisfied the masters but was considered to be divinely guided as well.

The teaching of the Lectorium centers on the Gnosis. It is not rare to hear members of the Lectorium speaking about "The Gnosis," with its marked definite article, almost as if it were a concrete existence with a life of its own. Everything must serve "The Gnosis." "The Gnosis" thus has an almost corporeal existence, its spiritual radiations exercising covert influence through the material scheme. One has the feeling that if everything dissolved and all that was left was "The Gnosis," that would be a consummation devoutly to be wished for the Lectorium leadership.

All the good Rosicrucians, those who had been fully transfigured in The Gnosis, would naturally be swept up into the haven of the eternal Gnosis to join their brethren already there, identified typologically as the Great White Brotherhood.

The scheme is a particularly rigorous reworking of the ancient Gnostic *logos-spermatikos* theme. Sparks of light have become entwined with the lower material order and need to be redeemed so that the Pleroma may be fully healed of contact with grossness and error and the material abortion burned up along with those attached to it. Either you heed the call of The Gnosis, represented by the Young Gnostic Brotherhood, or you are absolutely finished—in short, damned with a damnation that John Calvin would recognize as the destiny for all those not of the Elect.

"Man is a great miracle," says Hermes in the *Asclepius*, but only because he has the spark of *gnosis* within him, says the Lectorium. It must be separated from the gross body. It is not obvious to me that this is precisely what the writer of the *Asclepius* had in mind!

So, the Gnostic Rosicrucian believes that the Gnosis is a secret knowledge. The knowledge gives insight, once awakened, to the existence of two orders of nature: the divine, eternal, and unchangeable world and the world of nature, which has visible and invisible aspects. The task of the Lectorium is to evangelize this reality to show people the way to the source or "field of life" in the higher, original, and unfallen Nature (a Behmenist doctrine). There is an earthly Eve/Sophia and a heavenly Eve/Sophia. The community

is then drawn into the magnetic field enriched by the universal teachings of "All-wisdom." These are found in Eastern and Western sources.

Man is a microcosm. He has a godly core called the Rose of the Heart or Spark of God or "spirit atom" or "primal atom" or "jewel in the lotus." Oddly, this is situated in the right heart ventricle, giving the teachings a kind of gnostico-medical Paracelsian coloring. Thus, certain sins of omission are reflected in the state of the liver and "spleen system," as well as the heart.

The core principle must be revived, paradoxically, by a path of dying. The Gnostic Rosicrucian describes this path as *endura*, a word taken from accounts of the medieval Catharist practice of giving up food to spiritualize progressively before death. It is the self or ego-consciousness that must die.

Of course, in a strict order, this means that anyone who upsets the leadership needs to address the issue of "self" and its naughty assertiveness that needs controlling. Ask too many difficult questions, exhibit questionable attitudes or behavior, and you may be told that you "stand in your own way." Your ego is causing disharmony; settle down, calm yourself. Only when you are purified in intent may you approach again the high and mighty spiritual school. There is no place for ego-personalities (except in the leadership, where, as one might expect, the ego has been thoroughly dealt with). Obedience is good for the soul. Without it, you will cease to be at death, since your only hope is the awakened atom of divine spirit whose relation to the soul is dissolvable. A sense of humor may prove dangerous.

This is arguably a kind of Calvinist neo-Gnosticism that both Andreae and the ancient Gnostics might have had difficulty in recognizing as their own. The Lectorium is of course a new synthesis and is entitled to take what it will from the past and interpret it as it sees fit to do. We may ask questions, however. Is conscious self-denial the same as "killing the self "? What of *giving* the self? Who deserves such a thing? Who, as somebody asked Jesus, is my neighbor?—before being offered an outlandish example of a figure that nobody liked (the Samaritan). I am not sure the Lectorium would really like the Samaritan either: much too lax in religious doctrine—and of uncertain provenance. The point about the "Samaritan" was that he was everything the religious order neither approved of nor expected anything from. He might have been all sorts of bad things, but he demonstrated *love*, and that's what counts. The spiritual order of which Jesus spoke is as invisible from the

perspective of the world as it is also unexpected and mysterious.

In the Lectorium, Resurrection means the microcosm returning to its place. The leadership saw this process of liberation and life-fulfillment (?) as having been practiced by the Great Ones on Earth: Lao-tse, Buddha, Krishna, Hermes, Jesus Christ, and many others have gone the Path. This path knows no external authority. Only a path of self-Freemasonry in the power of "The Christ" (a characteristically Theosophical expression) can make this possible.

According to the order, the pupil who walks this path is first a "John man" who is "making paths straight for the Lord." Afterward, there is a psychologically registered moment when the Rose of the Heart begins to grow within him or her. Then, at that moment, the Christ principle begins to grow in the pupil, as the dove that came down to Jesus at the baptism that superseded the ministry of John. The pupil is now a "Jesus man."

Passing through different levels of initiation, the pupil, by his or her efforts, penetrates mysterious veils until he or she is "in the world but not of the world." There then develops a total Transfiguration. This state might arguably be regarded as fulfilling what Andreae meant by his devotion to the "imitation of Christ"—or not, as the case may be.

According to *The Apocalypse of the New Time*, the Lectorium is "the only true, universal church which is now in this century [the twentieth] going to start because of the God-given descent of the proper atmosphere in which we and our fellows are held."[5]

The Rosicrucian Society is the forecourt (a Masonic conception regarding the Temple) and the spiritual school for training pupils for the Golden and Rosy Cross. The order's hierarchy consists of an outer school and an inner school. The outer school consists of preparing students, probation students, confessing students; it prepares the "Priestelijke" (priestlike) group that leads to the Higher Consciousness school. The inner school consists of the "Priestelijke" group (a conception of partly Pasquallian derivation) or Ecclesia, the Society of the Golden Head, the Council of Elders (in good old Presbyterian tradition), and the grand master.

If you want to be a probationer, you must be serious. You must be a vegetarian, nonsmoking, nondrinking (alcohol), not a wearer of furs or feathers, not a watcher of television (which emits rays that damage the aura

as well as content that brainwashes the student, according to the school), and you must not be a member of any other church or political party.

If you can handle all that and you want to know more, the order has three symbols: the Circle (universal eternal activity), the Triangle (the three godly powers of the Trinity), and the Square (the square of building on which one must work on oneself). There is another symbol used during ceremonies: a golden Latin cross with a golden rose at its crux, on a brilliant white background. In the grand temples at Haarlem and Bad Münder, there is the image of a golden field in a circle in which is a star or pentagram. Around the field are seven groups of seven rays. These may symbolize the golden wedding garment of which St. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:44, referring to the reborn spirit. The fortynine rays symbolize the seven spirits before God's throne, subdivided and permanently active in creation.

The Lectorium considers itself to be a church, and members contribute to its upkeep and outreach with money and gifts. The headquarters remain in Haarlem, but there are also centers in the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Spain, Sweden, New Zealand, the United States, Brazil, Bolivia, and several African nations.

The pentagonal shape in the wall at the "Bethlehem" cave, Ornolac, Valley of the Ariège. (Author's photograph)

Probably the most famous member of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum is Joost Ritman, the "new Cosimo" (after Cosimo de' Medici, the fifteenthcentury Florentine banker, philosophical patron, and collector). Ritman's vision led to the establishment in 1984 of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica in Amsterdam. This institution is the world's largest

collection of books and manuscripts dealing with the history and philosophy of *gnosis*, alchemy, Rosicrucianism, Hermetic philosophy, Theosophy, and Western esotericism in the world. It provides learned publications on all these subjects and exhibits prestigiously throughout the European continent.

The Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica (BPH) has sponsored highlevel researches into these subjects, and there can be few interested scholars today who have not benefited directly or indirectly from the work of this remarkable library.

Without Mr. Ritman's support and encouragement, Dr. Carlos Gilly, for example, could not have made such astonishingly speedy progress with his Rosicrucian researches and discoveries; the study of Western esotericism as an academic discipline would hardly enjoy the profile it has achieved without the extraordinary facilities and atmosphere that the library has provided to scholars and seriously interested men and women for over twenty-five years. I have made my own indebtedness to the work of the library clear in the acknowledgments to this book and elsewhere.

Joost Ritman, founder of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, in his company offices, Amsterdam, in 1985.

The keynote and example of the BPH in Amsterdam underlines the possible future of Rosicrucianism in the world. The best path for our time would appear to be a radical and optimistic openness to spiritual sources and studies. How one may wish to take those interests further must remain the free choice of the individual.

Surely the days of the spiritual secret society are over. Spiritual doctrines

are spiritually discerned and cannot be violated, only ignored. Everyone *can* enter the Hidden House of the Holy Spirit, but it is nonetheless open only to those who see it. According to Johann Valentin Andreae, it was always that way.

EIGHTEEN

FULL CIRCLE

I have to admit to readers that I hesitated before including this chapter in a book that investigates the origin and development of Rosicrucianism. The stories surrounding the mystery of Rennes-le-Château and the alleged existence of a functioning (as opposed to fictional or semifictional) Priory of Sion are of such a slippery nature that reputable historians have left the business of sorting it all out to professional journalists, amateurs, alternative historians, or popular authors without academic reputations to be concerned about. It is an area full of pitfalls to trap the unwary, for sure: a crazy, surrealist, even sinister, but oddly suggestive mélange of fact, speculation, distortion, and downright lies.

And then, one thinks, is not this situation somewhat akin to the original story of the Rose Cross Fraternity?

The story dreamed up by Johann Valentin Andreae, taken by the curiosi for pregnant fact, may have since been dignified with the accumulated glamour and pseudoauthority of four hundred years of tradition, but we should never forget that it was in its day scandalous, dismissed by savants, exaggerated by the popular media of the period, hugely attractive to aficionados, and thoroughly mysterious to those without the essential keys of interpretation.

Andreae knew that the *Fama Fraternitatis* was a *game* played with the wits, fantasies, expectations, and follies of his time. It may well have been irresponsible, but at the time it was composed, such naughtiness seemed a small price to pay for the cause it promoted: a serious plea for Christian spiritual truth and openness in matters of science and religion in Germany—something that would expose how things really were, stir up minds into

considering the new situation from its highest perspective, and rekindle the high anticipation of the late fifteenth century, before the aborted Reformation's political outflow distorted the hopes for widespread reform of religion and learning.

It might be argued that Andreae's challenge fatally underestimated the credulity of his audience; but then again, the *Fama*'s eventual audience was not the one for which it was originally intended. Had Andreae desired to reach a broader audience, the *Fama* would have been printed. When it was, he was, as far as we can tell, embarrassed, at least in himself. What succor his friend Tobias Hess might have given him in the matter was soon withdrawn, as Hess died six months after the pirated publication in Kassel in March 1614.

Something of the kind may have happened with the game concerning the Priory of Sion.

This is not the place to rehearse the entire tangled story around the Priory of Sion game (there is no absolutely authoritative source I can point you to). Enough to say, from the start, that the tale of the French priest Bérenger Saunière (1852–1917) involved with the "secret society of secret societies" (namely, the Priory of Sion) has been for many years established (by French invesitigator Jean-Luc Chaumeil and others) as a hoax perpetrated primarily by three French characters with different—and not always clear—motives and a collective talent for intelligent mischief.

The shady, treasure-seeking, myth-making Pierre Plantard, the brilliant but dissolute Philippe, Marquis de Chérisey, and, less directly, the journalist and surrealist enthusiast Gérard de Sède combined their talents to generate not only a coherent fiction-dressed-as-fact starring "real" characters but also something of a work of art, not just an awesomely creative fabrication, but a work that in its entirety constituted a long-running—even open-ended—surrealist "event."

I do not know whether all or any of the conspirators deliberately modeled the game on the impulses surrounding the *Fama Fraternitatis* phenomenon, but it is a fact that the so-called *Dossiers secrets*, lodged in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, for Gérard de Sède to "find" when putting together his book based on Plantard and de Chérisey's "research," were at pains to establish that the Priory of Sion had (in 1188) adopted the second title, L'Ordre de la

Rose-Croix Veritas.

The Priory of Sion (first registered as a society in 1956) claimed to be in some sense a Rosicrucian order, even *the* Rosicrucian order. If you thought the Rosicrucian Fraternity had never really existed, that is because you did not know who was really behind it! This circular, labyrinthine logic goes for the Priory of Sion itself, of course.

The imposture of a pre-Rosicrucian Rose-Croix required only the addition of the fringe Masonic legend of Ormus, whereby the words "Rose Cross" derived not from the Rosicrucian manifestos but from an imaginary first-century-AD Egyptian Gnostic sage. Once that addition was made, the players could then take the Rosicrucian Brotherhood of the seventeenth century in their stride and throw in the Order of the Temple for good measure, like good Palapratians.

To add insult to injury, so to speak, Johann Valentin Andreae was then purloined from history and named as one of the past grand masters of the Priory of Sion. That certainly explained things! Was the Rosicrucian phenomenon itself but an incidence of the Priory's virtually timeless plot?

Where have we heard this kind of reasoning before? Was this not also the kind of theory that stemmed from the followers of Louis Claude de St.-Martin? That is, that a supernal body responsible for the spiritual guidance and manipulation of humankind had temporarily manifested itself through the temporary identity of Christian Rosenkreuz for the benefit of benighted humanity? Behind the fraternity lay an even greater, unknown body: Secret Chiefs of awesome manipulative powers! You may not know where they are, but if they want *you*, you will soon see how real they are. Like Andreae's fraternity, they know your intentions; they can read your mind. Who is not with them is against them.

For those unfamiliar with the bizarre and often tawdry story of Continental fringe Masonry, such implications might appear disturbing—a word often used of the Priory of Sion. I should say *typical* would be a better word, or even just plain *crazy*.

Perhaps for these reasons alone, the Priory game should be included in this book—that is, as a cunning work of art inspired (in large part) by Rosicrucianist mythology.

Philippe de Chérisey and/or arch-perpetrator Pierre Plantard (1920–2000) seemed to enjoy some knowledge of a particularly Martinist, fringe Masonic inheritance. This need not have come from anything more than a wide and attentive interest in French literature, philosophy, and painting, or from contacts and interest in the numerous schismatic Martinist orders that have been in France and elsewhere since at least the late 1880s.

It is interesting to note some of the parallels between the mythology of the *Fama* and the details of the Priory game. First, we have a treasure, discovered, apparently, in a vault or in a grave (at the Rennes-le-Château church) in Gallia Narbonensis. This treasure has something to do with the destiny of kings in Europe. Some great secret has been unearthed after being buried (in the *Fama*'s case, for 120 years). There is, of course, the Templar side of the story (secrets brought back from the East, connected with the Temple).

Second, we have the myth of the Hidden House again. The Priory of Sion has been hidden from the view of the vulgar but now sees fit to declare itself through writings of uncertain provenance. The promise of greater secrets to come is implied—something to do with the restoration of a kingdom, and with treasure. The Priory story gives us the Merovingians; the Rosicrucian mythology gives us the Lion. Either way, an ancient order is to be reestablished: a great Tradition is to be restored.

Help is on the way.

These two dominant parallels then set off a kind of unconscious chain reaction, a kind of "significant dreaming." The quasi-alchemical aspect of surrealism kicks in. These images stir up the deep dream state, and the volitive faculty is aroused by "associative magnetism." A magnetic rod has, as it were, been planted in the brain. "Connect, only connect," as E. M. Forster said—or was it Franz Anton Mesmer to his troubled ladies holding hands in a collective bath of magnetized water?

In short, one wishes to know more, and these archetypal images of lost order, lost treasure, secret house, holy relics, holy lady, quest for truth, suggested heresy, and so on simply begin to acquire elements of the collective unconscious, and very soon you have an unstoppable rolling stone of a determinedly psychic nature. Projection takes place, and the formerly subconscious desires and wishes of the seeker are thrust into the story. Very

soon, allegory becomes fact—or, note, *more important than fact.* The Game may even become a religion, if it is not, in fact, based on one already.

It should nevertheless be remembered that the original plot of Plantard and de Chérisey was, while being highly suggestive, fairly straightforward: priest finds hidden manuscript; priest finds treasure; Merovingian dynasty brought to attention of reader; Priory of Sion shown as historic secret center; priest becomes fabulously rich; priest dies with secret.

There was a small basis of fact and a genuine mystery. The priest's alterations to the dilapidated church did reveal a vial (what was in it is unknown); he did dig under and around the church; and he did become rich. He is supposed by locals to have found some items of Visigothic jewelry and some gold coins. Rennes-le-Château *might* once have been the Visigothic capital of Rhedae.

However, the greatest wealth Saunière enjoyed (after apparently using the money from the finds to renovate the church) seems to have come chiefly from a scandalously intense trade in masses for wealthy patrons' souls.

In 1885, Bérenger Saunière fell foul of the authorities for making a pro-monarchist, anti-republican sermon from his church pulpit during municipal elections. He seems to have shared the quite widespread view of his time that a return to monarchy in France would be good for religion and society. Many Martinists looked forward to the return of a holy king, prophesied by Paracelsus. Did Saunière share this particular view? Had he found out something about the Merovingian dynasty that could be used by monarchists? We do not know.

Whether he did or did not entertain grandiose spiritual views around his anti-republican position, his superiors nonetheless sent him away from Rennes to teach at a Narbonne seminary, but he was returned to the village the following year at the behest of his parishioners.

In 1910, the bishop of Carcassonne, irritated by Saunière's air of independence and wealth—which he refused properly to explain—banned him from celebrating mass in the church. Saunière refused to be assigned to another parish and was therefore forbidden to celebrate the mass at all. A new priest arrived, but it appears parishioners went to Saunière's private masses held in his big new house.

All this was very suggestive to the mind of treasure hunter Pierre Plantard, who began investigating the story in 1959, after the local restaurateur Noel Corbu (1912–1968) spread the story of a secret treasure at Rennes-le-Château to drum up trade for his restaurant. Corbu had bought Saunière's impressive house with its great view of the surrounding countryside; he saw its tourist potential—an insight fully justified by what has occurred at the village since.

Saunière and his brother Alfred, also a priest, both took an interest in local history, archaeology, and local aristocratic families. According to the popular work *The Sion Revelation*, by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, three major familes in the Rennes area, the de Fleurys, the de Nègres, and the d'Hautpouls, had late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century members involved with fringe Masonic orders such as the Philadelphes, the Rectified Scottish Rite, and the Disciples of Memphis, as one might expect during that period. Such persons would almost certainly have shared the view that France was ruled by an unholy republic and that a spiritual order should be restored.

There is no evidence that Saunière himself was a member of a Pasquallian-oriented fringe Masonic group; it was officially forbidden for priests to join Masonic orders, but some did regardless. Saunière's 1890s heyday at Rennes was contemporaneous with the Catholic neo- Rosicrucianist revival in Paris.

Pierre Plantard, on the other hand, was to some extent familiar with the existence of Catholic fringe Masonry and radical right-wing Catholic monarchist groups in Paris. He cofounded his own tiny youth order called Alpha Galates (pro-monarchist, pro-chivalry, pro-astrology, pro-Atlantis, pro-France), which, for a short time during World War II, ran a peculiar magazine called *Vaincre*, advocating not only opposition to "Jewish Masonry" (in line with Vichy and Nazi policy on that subject), but also the formation of a United States of Europe. Plantard's associate Louis le Fur was also an associate of Robert Schuman, sometimes called the father of the European Union.

While some of this is suggestive, just how suggestive any of it is depends entirely on the standpoint or intentions of the observer. How much do you *want* this all to mean?

A very great deal has been added to this rolling stone since the 1950s and 1960s, when, by all accounts, the mystery of Rennes and the Priory story came together explicitly, such that by the time Dan Brown came to write his

thriller *The Da Vinci Code*, he took for fact what was in most cases nothing more than speculation.

We now have the idea that the Priory's primary secret treasure was knowledge of the "bloodline" of Jesus and Mary Magdalene (Henry Lincoln, Michael Baigent, and Richard Leigh, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*); that the Priory of Sion is a front for plotters of federalist (but curiously right-wing) European domination ("There ought to be a Society in Europe"—the *Fama* again); that the Catholic Opus Dei organization has a long-running feud with the Priory of Sion (an echo of the church's age-old conflict with Gnosticism); and that Rennes-le-Château itself is some kind of centerpiece of a vast prehistoric temple, made up of Pythagorean-style, geometrically significant landmarks, all pointing to either extraterrestrials or some primordial civilization of unbelievable ingenuity, or both.

Is all this the work of neo-*curiosi*, or perhaps initiated descendants of the *original curiosi?* Will the *real curiosi* either stand up or come down to Earth?

They will not; they would not be *curiosi* if they did.

Out of all this curiosity, we now have a veritable revived cult of Mary Magdalene perpetrated with a certain amount of Gnostic feminism (see Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, *The Templar Revelation*), a regularly renewed interest in Freemasonry (the Priory of Sion was obviously behind *that* as well), and a new kind of book that goes under the harmless-sounding rubric of "alternative history."

Alternative history thrives on mysteries. You won't find an alternative history of the post office.

Is there an alternative to history? In a way, yes, there is, as we shall see. The alternative to history is *allegory*. In allegorical stories, the spiritual significance of the story is of far more value than the raw factual content. After all, one might say, who *really* knows what happened?

Jesus, after all, did not regale his listeners with detailed accounts of Jewish or Babylonian history. He used the legends of his countrymen and embroidered aspects of them into parables. The "mysteries" were apparently kept for the few. And we may presume that the contents of the mysteries were not historic accounts of academically unimpeachable accuracy either.

Mysteries are conveyed in symbols. Symbols can be decoded only by those

initiated into the state of mind whereby their content becomes obvious, their intentions clear to the enlightened intuition. This kabbalistic reading of holy writ or natural hieroglyph was urged as vital by the mind or minds behind the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, and it was also in the minds of those without whom the Priory of Sion game was unlikely ever to have been formulated.

Indeed, virtually the entire narrative basis of the so-called alternative histories concerned directly or otherwise with the Priory of Sion game derives from allegorical histories. Let us be precise: when we are talking about allegorical histories, we are talking about the traditional histories of fringe (or "high-grade") Freemasonry.

In the main, all that has occurred in the making of the paper-thin edifice of the Rennes-le-Château mystery is that traditional histories have been peddled as real history, even *suppressed* history: too powerful, too Earth-shattering, too incredible to be allowed out (but they have been!)—hence the surprise, hence the shock value, hence the sales. Indeed, the traditional histories are, quite genuinely, incredible.

What is a "traditional history"?

This is important to grasp, because failure to understand this point has led many researchers on wild-goose chases for many years and will doubtless continue to do so. Our generally lazy minds like to think that "histories" are factually true, if sometimes inaccurate or weakly substantiated, unless, that is, they are recognized as having simply been fabricated rather as propaganda or as deliberate misinformation. However, the factual value of a history may not be the only consideration. We all like to know *what happened*, but on what *level* did a thing happen?

History is a story made up of stories of what happened. Some stories may be corroborated with dates, times, and numbers, and some not. History is hardly a fair trial when all of the witnesses are dead.

As in a joke, a fiction, a movie, or a play, a story may be unreal but nonetheless true.

The *significance* of a story is generally what matters most to us. The significance of the story forces itself onto our attention by signs. The story or narrative may be only the object (not the purpose) from which the signs

emerge. However, if the *sign* connects with our real experience, we take the story as a whole as meaningful, truthful, or insightful.

For example, if I create a wicked king called Craklog whom you see on stage beating up a poor, defenseless peasant called Timbo, the story and names may be imaginary, but if I present that play in a place ruled by a vicious regime, the audience will understand the sign and know it speaks a truth. As playwright Bertolt Brecht said, “Realism does not consist in reproducing reality, but in showing how things really are.”

Remember how this book began, with a story about the interpretation of signs in the heavens. Kepler said that the signs’ significance (surrounding the new star of 1604) could not be decoded without mathematical expertise; his opponents said, “Maybe, but this new star connects with our inner experience, our truth. It must be a revelation!” Andreae saw the point and wrote a drama about signs called the *Fama Fraternitatis*, an allegory for the signs of the times.

In the medieval period, people saw plays put on by trade guilds, always at the time of religious festivals. They were entertaining and usually conveyed a link or sign between the way the trade wanted to be seen and a religious story from the Bible, or elements of the Bible mixed with congenial legend.

When the tradesman freemasons had to justify their existence to external authorities, they composed “traditional histories” to show how significant they were. These were narratives that linked the masons of freestone (freestone masons or “freemasons”) to well-known historical, wise, skilled, and authoritative figures. Thus the late-medieval freemasons spoke of their former patrons as King Hiram of Tyre, the geometer Euclid, the philosopher Hermes, Charles Martel, King Athelstan, the figures of Seth and Tubal Cain in the book of Genesis, and so on. These traditional histories were then joined to their rules and regulations, known as Charges, and were read to apprentices in a (presumably) simple ritual setting (about which we know next to nothing).

In the early eighteenth century, the symbolic content of Freemasonry became markedly more involved as the brotherhood was separated from the trade. What you lost in practical application (architecture), you gained in moralizing symbolism, so to speak. This tendency increased exponentially after the middle of the century, for the simple reason that people were

demanding more and more meaningful content from their Masonic activities.

Willermoz, for example, was looking for the absolute truth of life and religion itself. He found it in Pasqually and applied it to Masonry. Fabre d'Olivet may have been inspired by this kind of traditional metahistory to produce *his* theory of significant sign-encoded history.

As a result of the demands on Freemasonry to yield absolute truth, the symbolic aspects of the traditional histories became intensified. Rosicrucianism—which may have been present at the birth of nontrade, symbolic Freemasonry—was certainly brought center stage in the evolution of symbolic and spiritual Freemasonry.

The fact is that each new Masonic order had to have its own traditional history to go along with its charter or right to exist. This is the case with all new Masonic orders. Stories about the Templars digging into the Temple Mount during the Crusades, for example, derive from traditional histories of the additional orders. The figure of Ormus derives from a fringe Masonic traditional history. The idea of hidden vaults revealing something sacred is a staple of Masonic fringe orders and serves as the main allegorical format for the Royal Arch degree or order and of the socalled Masonic cryptic rites (referring to an imaginary crypt beneath the Holy of Holies).

Stories about the true cross, secrets brought back by knights, even the oft-told stories of Knights Templar seeking succor in Scotland after suppression by the pope, and many more fascinating works of imaginative, resonant fiction derive from the free-ranging pens of composers of traditional histories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Hollywood could find a veritable treasure trove of tales in the vaulted minds of unknown Masons who dreamed up the traditional histories. And Hollywood is possibly where such stories now belong, though they would mean a good deal less sundered from their original ritual settings.

We saw a good example of the making of a traditional history in chapter 16, in which the need is described of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn's parent order, the SRIA, to have a pedigree and a past to justify itself, the Golden Dawn likewise. This is the sort of thing that is the norm in Freemasonry. The problem is that most researchers do not recognize the fact. That is because they were not intended to know. These stories operate for the benefit of Freemasons. It is an inner, Masonic culture—the nature of which

Masons themselves generally have but dim knowledge or scant wish to know.

Traditional histories are not alternative sources for knowledge of historical events.

The traditional histories were never intended to occupy the thoughts of writers of school and university textbooks. They were written to give the candidates to the order a moral or spiritual lesson. Furthermore, the more exalted the grade, the more the composer of the traditional history (such as the symbolic raising from the dead of Hiram Abif in the Rectified Scottish Rite) considered his story to be superior to mere history.

The stories, proponents believed, had grasped the *spiritual significance* of human history. The spiritual significance may be considered as transcending the disciplines of academic chronicling or of archaeology. That is not to say that they deny the value of solid, responsibly researched history. They simply perceive to their own satisfaction that such history fails to capture essential reality, and operates at a different plane of reality from that enjoyed in ritual, symbolic settings. Academic historians might object: “But this is nothing but imagination,” to which the opponent may reply: “History is such stuff that dreams are made on”; history is not a science: analyze an event, and you will find its coordinates are infinite and untraceable.

On the other hand, in a lived, ritual setting, the story is part of the drama and speaks to the real man and woman. The story is therefore intended primarily to be dramatic, not historical; life is not history. History provides the coloring and helps stimulate the imagination, but the imagination—divine faculty of creative perception—is the thing. A ritual that does not inspire the imagination is not working. The same theory applies to art, where nonliteral representation is accepted as a path to artistic truth. A painting is often more evocative than a photograph; van Gogh is preferable to a postcard.

For the Martinist Mason, the traditional history was intended to take the candidate to the level of the spiritually significant metahistory: the story of the reintegration of humanity, a truth beyond fact, and of which fact is merely a manifestation.

For a creative Martinist, then, history can be almost like a plaything: a Game, in fact, with a serious inner meaning. You can play with the history to reveal a greater truth. As we might have deduced from our examination of Fabre d’Olivet in chapter 16, the Greater Truth of the Martinist neo-

Rosicrucian is the origin and survival of what is known in such circles as the Tradition.

The Tradition is the original order, whose echoes have survived in religion and in our souls. The ancient Egyptians derived their order from an unknown greater order, which is now, according to Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, both immanent to those it chooses to contact and, in theory, locatable in the Himalayas in a subterranean manner.

Like Christian Rosenkreuz's House of the Holy Spirit, Saint-Yves's Agarttha conceals itself from the curious. And yet, as Andreae might have observed, it is the curious who seem to know most about it.

A great joke has indeed been played on the Western world: a joke, or a game, with a serious core to it. While it is not clear to me whether anything remotely like this was the specific intention of Pierre Plantard (he had friends and contacts with Martinist and synarchist beliefs at least during the 1940s with his peculiar Alpha Galates Order), the game of the Priory of Sion nonetheless carried within its deceptive meanderings a mind that appears to have drunk quite a lot from the Martinist cup we last saw passed around in Paris in the 1890s among closely woven figures such as de Guaïta, Péladan, Papus, novelist Maurice Barrès, and others who frequented Symbolist circles where significant signs, angels, souls, and hetero-Catholic Rosicrucianism and eroticism were appreciated and acted upon. (Maurice Barrès would later dismiss Symbolism itself as nothing more than "games" that had had their day; Symbolism had gone out of fashion.)

In particular, we may recall the strange figures of Antoine Fabre d'Olivet (1767–1825), Bernard-Raymond Fabré Palaprat (1773–1838), and Joseph Alexandre Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (1842–1909). Having examined the thoughts and beliefs of these men in chapter 16, astute readers will have seen at once that without them, the Priory of Sion game could never have manifested as and when it did.

The *structural materials* of the game (the "furor" created itself) may be located within the philosophical world dominated by those acquainted with the Tradition, who were familiar with the theurgic magic of Pasqually and the reintegrationist spiritual philosophy and distinctive metahistorical scheme of Louis Claude de St.-Martin.

These men's interlinked ideas point upward to one collective message for

the Western world: there *is* an alternative to atheism, materialism, socialism, communism, anarchism, and unbridled capitalism.

In other words, we find an echo of a long-lost message, nothing less than the quixotic cry for reformation of the whole wide world.

Nevertheless, these are all deductions formed after the event. The idea that Plantard and his associates wished to launch a reformation of Europe or the world through generating a kind of neo-*Fama* experience is surely mistaken. No, what seems to have happened is that the residuum of the *Fama* experience in the esoteric circles of the world was projected *onto* the story of the hidden treasure of Rennes-le-Château, by those who came in the wake of the Plantard–de Chérisey–de Sède game.

A specific intention may not have been involved in the game. However, there must have been something behind it, we might think, other than the sheer fun of the fair. Well, if it was a pure surrealist event, then a purpose would have been regarded as a vulgar intrusion; a labyrinth should speak for itself.

But while this may have been the case for Plantard's two main associates, his recorded comments on the scheme suggest he did have some private axes to grind, if of a somewhat shifting nature. Plantard appears to have been interested in popularizing a specific notion of a mystique of monarchy, in particular, a sacred French monarchy. There is here the echo of the Holy King idea dear to Martinism and prefigured in the Paracelsian prophecies echoed in the *Fama* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*.

For Plantard, France appears to have been a kind of holy land, a kind of earthly reflection of a heavenly order. If it was not literally sacred, then certainly France had a sacred destiny; Plantard believed it needed to recover that destiny.

Odd as it may sound, that is really not much different from William Blake's ideas about England's having been given a spiritual charge to manifest spiritual truth, poetically expressed in his epic narratives of the recovery of the Ancient Man (called Albion by Blake) in the world (see Blake's poem "Jerusalem," 1804).

A similar idea pervades some Republican circles and elsewhere in the United States, namely, that the nation must heed its "manifest destiny."

Human souls need to need this sort of thing. When we attach our identity to the nation (our birth gives us precious little choice in this), then we expect the nation should likewise have a soul, a purpose, a destiny: God's special will for the nation. We should like to find our personal soul's destiny and that of the nation in harmony. When this does not occur, there is profound discontent, a discontent that prosperity alone cannot extinguish.

But what happens when the manifest destinies of two (or more) nations clash? This occurred in Judaea in the first century AD, and it has recurred many times since. The obvious answer is that we need a higher point of unity. St.-Martin was hardly original in promoting the higher cause of a divine humanity. Well, we now look to a global destiny made up of cooperative nations, ruled according to the, or some, rights of man, but a pool of destinies does not quite grab the sinews of the soul.

France endured this problem after the war. The United States of America and the British Empire liberated France from German domination. This created uncomfortable feelings in many people who had fought against the Germans in the name of Patrie (native land). The question of how Patrie might survive closer European integration, as well as the compromises to sovereignty in a United Nations dominated by a few countries, was somehow bound up with Plantard's musings and schemes (de Gaulle's difficulties with NA TO are well known). Plantard was, from all accounts, something of a fantasist.

It would appear that Plantard's personal panacea lay in the (to him, at least) compelling ideal of sacred monarchy. This mystique stemmed from the magical milieu in which stories of the "lost" Merovingian dynasty abound. The mystique drew attention to the disparity of spiritual content and sacred order—holy magic—between what Plantard saw as France's deep and glorious past and modern times, when, in the 1950s and 1960s, it appeared to many Frenchmen and -women as if France, a longtime world leader, was falling apart.

It appears that Pierre Plantard could not resist attaching a portion of the mystique around the Merovingians and their alleged descendants to himself. Plantard had, as they say, his own ideas. They were romantic, personal, and opportunist. He saw a place for himself in the world but did not feel he could approach the corrupt world directly. He got used to indirect, allusive means;

he became skilled at them.

My own judgment concerning the alarmist notion that the E.U. was or is a "synarchist plot" is that the material put forward is highly circumstantial at best.

There seem few signs to date that the E.U. is heading in the direction of providing a cup for universal spiritual reintegration, nor can I envisage the usual gang of political freeloaders bowing down to a Holy King or new Gnostic Emperor!

While many would agree that a king or queen would probably get more common approval than yet another dismal, deceiving politician, the politicians themselves would never let go of the bone long enough to allow a popular monarchist movement to get going. These are the dreams of romantics, which, while they frequently (and perhaps deservedly) capture the popular imagination, tend to fall flat on the razor-sharp rocks of human reality. On the other hand, if someone could come up with the right figure, it might be a different story. I do not think an anxious public would demand such a one to be a direct descendant of Jesus! A good dose of blue blood, the common touch, and an unblemished record would probably suffice.

In the almost certain absence of any such regal epiphany, the disappointed and the frustrated need their dreams to live on. Someday, all this might be better. Someday the world will wake up. Let us keep the flame alive! My brother Victor used to say, "Take away a man's dreams; you take away the man."

However, there may be better dreams, and if, as Shakespeare's magician Prospero said, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on," then we can, I think, shape the common dream, or even make the uncommon dream come true, at least for a time.

It seems to me that the urge to reshape our thinking on a host of issues that emerged in the 1960s in the minds of the more mystically minded observers of the era had a good deal to do with the construction of what I once called the "*Fama* of the 1980s," the story of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.

The subtext of the book was, I think, a polemic concerned with challenging the nature and claims of both religious and secular authority, and in this sense it was an heir to works such as those produced by Fabre d'Olivet 160 years

previously. There was an agenda. The story it contained was the torpedo of that agenda.

Holy Blood, Holy Grail was clearly taken up by Dan Brown on the basis of the strength of the story it contained as a major source for his novel *The Da Vinci Code* (along with Picknett and Prince's *The Templar Revelation,* itself inspired by *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*). While I suspect that Dan Brown was less concerned with the subtext, the subtextual signs nevertheless entered into his work by associative logic. It was, it should be noted, in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* that Professor Frances Yates was reported to have said that Leonardo da Vinci was a kind of Rosicrucian in outlook.

Where then lay the code or sign to prove it?

Through these works, and a number of others, the public has been introduced to a whole range of previously unregarded genuine facts of history as well as myths and speculative fantasies. People have learned something about Gnosticism, traditions about Mary Magdalene, the influence of magical or occult philosophy on the minds of great men and women of history. They have learned that prevailing notions of social order are not absolute. They have learned that the world is full of suggestive mysteries. They have learned to consider mystical experience as having a different flavor from the religion inherited at school, home, or church. They have learned that the big churches are not necessarily the only sources of religious knowledge or wisdom. They have learned something about Freemasonry in its several forms, other than the usual crazed suspicions about wicked secret societies. They have perhaps learned that history is written by the victors, not by the righteous. And they have learned that the past may be far more interesting and instructive than the prevailing material culture might have suggested.

And they have had a good time while they've been doing it. No political tract ever gave so much pleasure to so many un-brainwashed people as these texts have provided. While the dull mainstream flows on, people have had a chance to think for themselves about the world they are living in and have enjoyed the opportunity to question seriously what kind of world they are *really* living in, who is running that world, and for what purposes.

What more may any book hope to achieve?

Did the *Fama Fraternitatis* change the world? Arguably, it did. Arguably, it will continue to do so.

Humankind forever stands at the crossroads, until we make a decision. Will we heed the invitation to the mysterious alchemical wedding, or will we go back to sleep?

FOOTNOTES

*1 The circle represents spirit, the square represents formative emanations.

*2 ∴ is an old Rosicrucian/Masonic symbol used to denote genuine magical orders—orders whose authority lies beyond this world.

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Also by Tobias Churton

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Kiss of Death: The True History of the Gospel of Judas

The Magus of Freemasonry

Miraval: A Quest

Why I Am Still an Anglican (ed.)

About the Author

Tobias Churton is a filmmaker and the founding editor of the magazine Freemasonry Today. He studied theology at Oxford University and created the award-winning documentary series and accompanying book The Gnostics, as well as several other films on Christian doctrine, mysticism, and magical folklore. He lives in England.